Gregory A. Waller

Robert Southard and the History of Traveling Film Exhibition

Robert Southard: Roadshowman

As detailed and diligent as the very best histories of American film in the 1930s are, they don't have much room at all for the likes of Robert Southard (1901-1985), a traveling film exhibitor who worked Kentucky and Arkansas during and after the Depression. Though he spent years in the movie business, Southard would have no claim to, or at least no way to claim, our attention were it not that he kept a detailed record of these years, which is now housed in the Manuscript and Folklife Archives at Western Kentucky University. Southard's show diaries are an invaluable historical resource, above all, because they speak of and from a rural, Southern place far outside the Hollywood-New York axis of the motion picture industry. These diaries can thus help us to speculate about regionalism in American cinema, rethink our understanding of moviegoing during the 1930s and 1940s, assess how the coming of sound film altered exhibition practices, and, more generally, fill in the history of itinerant film exhibition.

On the Road with Robert Southard

Born with the new century, by the early 1920s Robert Southard had quit what he called the "dreadful hard work" in the "black hole" of a coal mine and left his family's 300-acre farm near the Green River in Western Kentucky.[1] He was headed north to Detroit and the promise of assembly-line opportunity. It was a familiar route in the first decades of the twentieth century, undertaken by countless white and African-American young men and women from the South.

Enrolled in night classes at Detroit's Central High School while working at a Ford plant, Southard dreamt in his letters home of becoming a building engineer, running a saw mill, or going into "scientific farming."

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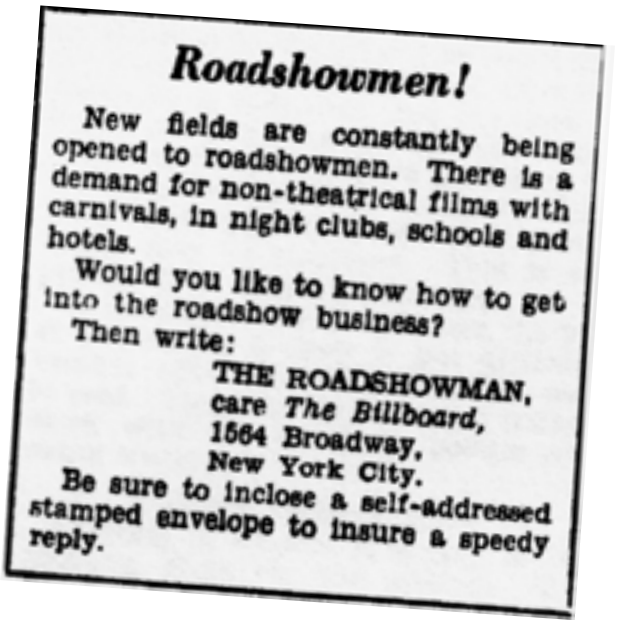


Roadshowmen!

New fields are constantly being opened to roadshowmen. There is a demand for non-theatrical films with carnivals, in night clubs, schools and hotels.

Would you like to know how to get into the roadshow business?

Then write:

THE ROADSHOWMAN,
care *The Billboard*,
1564 Broadway,
New York City.

Be sure to inclose a self-addressed stamped envelope to insure a speedy reply.

Left: A call to the road;
Right: A combination baseball field/picture show

He read Zane Grey novels and took in the movies on his day off. Though he listened to "swell dance music" on a radio that could pull in Chicago stations, Southard probably never felt much like he was living through a Jazz Age. There's no question, however, but that he had a close-up experience of how auto-mobility was reconfiguring American life. "Plan No.1," he wrote a friend in 1927, "is to get out of the city and spend some time in the wide open spaces." He made it.

That same year two of Southard's brothers had become itinerant film exhibitors, but even though they bragged of grossing as much as 33 dollars a night he was skeptical: "I bet every dollar they take in with this show will cost them 99 cents," he declared in August 1927. After the economy crashed he remained in Detroit as long as the factory work at Ford held out. Then he joined his brother Preston in a traveling moving picture show that criss-crossed rural Kentucky and Arkansas. By the end of the 1933 season, they had acquired a "full blown set up": tent, canvas sidewalls, tent posts, 30 1x8-inch planks, each 11 feet long, and 30 jacks to elevate the seats (all of which would be destroyed in a fire in August 1935). In 1934 they presented their first talkies in a brief tour through Appalachian Eastern Kentucky, where the mountainous terrain meant that the trailer Southard towed was "swaying and almost turned over on some curves," and where setting up the show took most of an entire day, what with "several [locals] around watching us—mostly boys with their usual questions." They worked Western Kentucky and Arkansas through the summer and fall of 1934 struggling to correct problems with their sound equipment and sometimes still relying on silent films.

For months at a time in the mid-1930s, Robert Southard remained in Detroit, where he was able to find work for 50 cents an hour at a Ford plant polishing drive shaft bearings or attaching the four bolts that held the water connection to the engine during a motor test. It was a "very hard day's work—hands and arms sore. Greasy, dirty," he noted on March 15, 1934. Yet even when he was up north, the traveling show remained a regular concern, as he checked out projectors and films, tinkered with the trailer and the equipment, and also took a "sound technicians" course from the International Correspondence School. (This training would come in handy in the early 1940s, when he devised a public address system that he mounted on his car and used to advertise his show in small towns.)

In 1939 Southard relocated permanently to Kentucky and went on the road with his own show, screening films in a tent in the summer and in schoolhouses and vacant stores in the winter. He opened his first theater in late 1939, offering movies one or two nights a week. Soon he had built up a circuit of six theaters, mainly in mining company towns in the Western Kentucky coalfields, while he simultaneously kept two or three traveling tent shows on the road. A few years later he started his own film exchange, then added a drive-in and a baseball park to his holdings near the family farm, which he now also owned.

"The fields are full of strawberry workers," Southard wrote in May 1933 from near Wooster, Arkansas. We "used about 300 [hand]bills—took them in berry fields and tacked [them] on sheds. Put in mail boxes and tacked up everywhere." Earlier that year he and his brother had traded another traveling showman a five-reel Tom Mix picture and a beat-up copy of

Publicity for the show

Chaplin's *The Count* for a five-reel Big Boy Williams western, Harold Lloyd's one-reeler, *The Flirt,* and a "Gump cartoon." All told, "seven reels for seven reels and we gave one dollar difference." Their business involved a seemingly endless number of transactions: negotiating with property owners and civic officials, deciding on percentage arrangements with public schools, purchasing or trading for films and equipment. For 55 dollars and a two-reel comedy the brothers acquired a Powers projector, three sets of lenses, a 110-volt DC motor, a rewinder, film cement, and two 900-watt projection bulbs from a former theater operator in St. Paul, Arkansas. This at a time when box-office receipts were not only counted in cash: "We may not get much money here," Southard admitted, "but we will never starve." A playdate in the summer of 1933 could bring in $3.69, a pound of butter, three quarts of blackberries, and a quart of peaches. It could also bring in unexpected trouble: "not many women at show tonight—probably afraid because there was so much hell [last night] with the Hogtown gang. The crazy gang was out again tonight. They tore out back window and most of them crawled in." The trouble could also be a little more on the mischievous side, as when "sneeze powder [was] used in tent by someone," in Lewisberg, Kentucky, and "two or three women went home."

It is not only this sort of vividly rendered, anecdotal detail that makes Southard's diaries remarkable historical documents. While he does describe moviegoers and troublemakers, business dealings and unexpected dilemmas, for the most part Southard's daily entries carefully record practical and precise information about each screening: date, venue, weather conditions, program, local contacts, expenses, box office receipts, even concession sales. The result is an exceedingly rare and detailed glimpse into the day-to-day business of itinerant film exhibition, as the following information culled from the 1939 diary suggests.

Southard's 1939 season stretched from April 14 to October 23, with only three open dates, though two weekend shows were lost in August when rain ran down the speaker wire and into the sound amplifier, and another on June 3, when "came up a very hard rain about 5 p.m. and rained for more than an hour. Stakes were not driven deep enough . . . tent blew over and fell flat on seats." Surprisingly—given that this was rural Kentucky, after all—the Southard tent show was open for business on every Sunday but one during 1939, usually drawing bigger-than-average crowds. Yet nothing in the diary suggests that Southard was out to directly or indirectly challenge local church practices. At one stop he even struck a special arrangement with a nearby Methodist church, which agreed to end its revival meeting at 9:00 p.m., allowing him to start his movies at 9:30, just in time for the erstwhile churchgoers to take their seats.

Southard's records for 1939 list 62 engagements (usually three- or four-night stands) in 41 different localities. He returned to seven of these places three or four times during the season. Once winter arrived, he began to operate an indoor theater in a schoolhouse in the coal company town of Beech Creek on Wednesdays and Thursdays and another theater in a converted store in his hometown of Green River, Kentucky, on Saturdays. Southard's 1939 itinerary covered sections of eight Southwestern Kentucky counties, spanning approximately 60 miles east to west and 50 miles north to south, a coal-mining and farming region traversed by small country roads that wound over hills and across creeks. His touring principally kept him in three counties: Muhlenberg, Todd, and Butler, which, according to the 1940 Census, had a total population of 66,149, of whom 4% were identified as "Negro," and 51% as "Rural-farm." By far the largest town on his route was Lewisberg (population 3,686), but only three other places Southard visited had more than 1,000 residents, and none of the 41 localities where he screened films during 1939 had an active movie theater.

Carrying his equipment and supplies in three cars, each towing a trailer, Southard set up his show on var-

ious sites, including municipal buildings, Masonic Halls, vacant lots, private land, and—most often—on the grounds of public schools: one-room county schoolhouses, high schools, consolidated schools, even, on occasion, "colored schools." Not only the actual locations, but also the cost for using the sites varied quite a bit. To secure a venue, Southard might have to provide a certain number of free tickets, make a straight cash payment, or agree to pay a percentage of the box office, ranging from 10% on weekdays up to 25% on Friday and Saturday. A "town tax" might also be tacked on. These arrangements were negotiated in advance, place by place, depending in part on whether the property was public or private and who locally controlled its use. A particularly expensive three-night stand during July, for instance, cost Southard two dollars per night town-tax, 50 cents and six tickets nightly for the owner of the lot, and seven more tickets each night for the town marshal and his family.

Paying customers were charged 10 cents for children (meaning six- to ten-year-olds) and 15 cents for adults, though Southard always charged a nickel more if he was paid in coal company scrip (called "flickers"), which could only be spent at the company store. His daily diary entries record the box office total for each playdate, broken down into cash and—when relevant—flickers. In the five coal company towns Southard visited, moviegoers were far more likely to save a nickel by paying with cash rather than flickers. Sometimes Southard even notes the exact total of child and adult admissions, numbers which support oral-history claims that "everyone" in these localities went to the movies. A Sunday night in Sweeden [sic] drew 273 adults and 70 children; a Friday in Beech Creek drew 101 adults and 81 children. These were good-sized crowds, and on several other occasions Southard also took in more than 30 dollars for a single show. His audiences, however, were likely even larger and more varied in age than these numbers indicate, since anyone over ten counted as an adult and kids under six were not charged for admission; free passes didn't figure in Southard's box office totals, and neither did those people who snuck into the show. As would be expected, business was best on Fridays and Saturdays, though Sundays were sometimes even better. The average daily receipts for May 1939 were $20.67, which meant that the audience probably averaged at least 138 people for each show (calculated at 15 cents per ticket). For the first two weeks of August, when Southard lowered his prices to 10 cents for all seats, nightly paid attendance averaged 167, substantially larger than the crowds that he would draw to his indoor theaters later that year.

Advertisements featured the "sound-on-film" technology

One reason the tent show proved to be such a steady success in 1939 was that Southard knew his territory and his audiences—as well as his competition. There wasn't much he could do about high-school basketball games, the occasional fish-fry at a Masonic Lodge, or a "holly [sic] roller tent meeting" two miles down the road. But when the Fitch-Provo show, a competing outfit, tried to move in on Southard's dates, he took swift action:

> Fitch-Provo show pulled in here Sunday and opened up here Monday night. He knew I had the place advertised as I had passed out 200 handbills when I was here before. I went to Central City and had 1000 special bills struck for Beech Creek admission cut to 5 & 10¢ and flickers at same price. When we pulled in here today I found out that he was showing a "Tarzan" picture so I went to Central City and had 500 bills struck on "Tarzan" extra at the same admission. I waited until 2:30 p.m. before starting to distribute the bills—then sent out two cars and had about 6 boys to help them take them to houses. One car went to the country and the other the town.

What Southard offered moviegoers was his version of an approximately two-hour-long "balanced" program such as one might see in a small-town picture show that operated two or three days a week. He carried at least enough film to cover a six-night stand in Sacramento, Kentucky, and to not have to repeat any features or shorts during three different three-night stands in the coal company town of Martwick. All told, he screened 69 different films over the entire 1939 season. Southard's play dates that year always included an hour-long, 35mm "B" picture, usually at least three years old, like the horse-racing action melodrama, *Racing Blood* (Conn, 1936), a Buster Crabbe vehicle (*She Had to Choose* [Majestic, 1934]), or Westerns starring Kermit Maynard (*Song of the Trail* [Ambassador, 1936], Tim McCoy (*Man from Guntown* [Puritan, 1935]), or John Wayne (*Riders of Destiny* [Monogram, 1933]). Invariably, a cartoon was also on the bill. Southard owned three Felix the Cat cartoons, for example, as well as a Porky Pig (*Polar Pals* [1931]), Disney's *Mickey's Service Station* (1935), and something he referred to simply as the "skeleton cartoon." Two additional shorts rounded out each program, and Southard screened at least 50 different shorts over the 1939 season, including prize fight films featuring Joe Louis and an episode of Tiffany Pictures' musical comedy series, *Voice of Hollywood*. Programs varied depending on the physical condition of prints and on his regular acquisition of new material. After a show in May, for example, Southard drove to Cincinnati and purchased six reels of film for 55 dollars.

The B-movie fare at Southard's tent

Since Robert Southard was by 1939 a seasoned traveling exhibitor who would prosper even more during the 1940s, I think we can assume that he was providing a show that satisfied his mixed-age, heterosocial rural audiences, within the limits of what affordable prints were available from other showmen or from the Ohio and Tennessee film companies he dealt with. Thus it is intriguing when viewing *Racing Blood, Song of the Trail, She Had to Choose,* or *Riders of Destiny* (which are all currently available on video) to imagine these low, low budget movies as part of an evening's entertainment at Southard's Tent Theater pitched near a small schoolhouse in a Kentucky locality still hard hit by the Depression. Like so many B-movies, *Racing Blood* is a fast-paced crime melodrama—packed with reversals of fortune, fistfights, and police searches, before spunky Frankie Darro and the other decent folks earn a last-second victory over urban gangsters who have spread their corrupting influence in horse country. At the same time, *Racing Blood*'s mixture of genres and modes makes it feel like a latter-day example of the cinema of attractions, overflowing with interpolated musical numbers by an African-American quintet, comic bits involving a drunk and a hypochondriac, newsreel-style stock footage, and several horse-racing scenes. *Riders of Destiny* wears its politics much more on its sleeve: a mysterious sharpshooter (played by John Wayne) is revealed to be Singing Sandy, who is actually a federal agent dubbed the "man from Washington." Sandy arrives at an imperiled small town and manages both to serenade a surprisingly modern looking rancher's daughter and also to foil a greedy businessman's scheme to use his monopoly on the local water supply to run homesteaders off their land. Not only does the well-dressed villain end up drowning,

but his water rights, along with his extensive land holdings, become what Sandy calls "community property." In effect, *Riders of Destiny* offers a redistribution of wealth and power that trumps what the New Deal would offer rural Kentuckians.[2]

It would be intriguing to consider the films Southard actually screened as a sort of genre in themselves (defined in terms of exhibition and programming rather than production and promotion) and to take what we might call the long view of his practices. How, for instance, did Southard's show change as he came to use sound films exclusively, or as his early 1930s tours in Arkansas and Appalachia gave way to a focus on a relatively small section of Southwestern Kentucky at the end of decade? There is, however, a bigger question at hand: how does the information from Southard's diaries fit into, add to, our understanding of the history of itinerant moving picture shows and of regional moviegoing and exhibition practices during and after the Depression?

Traveling Film Exhibition After the Nickelodeon

Thanks to the research of Charles Musser and Carol Nelson, Kathy Fuller, and others, we now have some sense of the varied activities of itinerant exhibitors during the first 15 years of film history in the United States, from the many Vitascope entrepreneurs in 1896 to mom-and-pop shows working small-town circuits, large operations like Lyman H. Howe's "Lifeorama," and moving picture shows at Chautauqua assemblies.[3] This scholarship on early traveling exhibition has helped to underscore certain points that I would argue are essential for understanding the cultural history of film in the United States: the pervasiveness of moving pictures in American life apart from the movie theater; the need to look at audiences and exhibition practices outside the metropolis; the place of moving pictures within the larger field of commercial entertainment; and the links between film exhibition and non-commercial institutions like churches, civic organizations, and schools.

As might be expected, the role of itinerant exhibition in the United States diminished appreciably with the rise of the nickelodeon and then a more formal system of film distribution. Yet small-scale motion picture roadshows never entirely disappeared, and it is possible to chart the precursors of Robert Southard during the 1910s through the motion picture trade press. Given the size of the communities visited, the isolated and predominantly solitary activities of traveling exhibitors, and the particular promotional efforts they employed—likely limited to handbills and flyers—it is extremely doubtful that we can locate much evidence of these roadshowmen apart from the intriguingly sketchy bits and pieces that found their way into a trade magazine like *The Moving Picture World,* a weekly periodical for exhibitors that has come to serve as a primary source for film historians.

That a good number of references to traveling exhibitors are to be found buried deep in *The Moving Picture World*'s columns from Kentucky and Tennessee in 1913 to 1915 is somewhat surprising since the magazine's Louisville correspondent claimed in May of 1914 that "motion pictures are certainly becoming popular throughout the state [Kentucky], and every crossroads has a show house of some kind."[4] Nevertheless, there apparently was still room in this region for itinerant showmen who were not on the urban lecture circuit or affiliated with carnivals. *The Moving Picture World* mentions, to cite only a couple of examples, James H. Daly, based in St. Louis, Missouri, who "covers little towns of 300 to 1,000 population with a moving picture outfit . . . he presents his shows in school houses, churches, stores, opera houses, or anywhere else that offers and has been very successful"; and "R.E. Powell of Hawesville KY [who] has purchased a second hand gas projecting machine and outfit with which he will play a [weekly] circuit of six small towns in the vicinity of Hawesville Ky. It is understood that a wagon and tent will be used and the show transferred daily from one town to the other."[5]

The Moving Picture World's most fulsome account of traveling exhibition in the region during the mid-teens concerned one J. E. Morris of New Albany, Indiana (right across the Ohio River from Louisville), who

> has been exceptionally fortunate with his road shows, but it is a question of good management more than anything else which has attributed to his success. He buys his films outright and carries forty to fifty reels so that he is able to play in one town for several days without having to worry about whether or not he is on a railroad or whether supplies will reach him. When he goes into a town the first thing he does is to arrange with one of the churches to give it a certain percentage of the profits. The church workers get busy and take a real interest in the show which would be lacking otherwise. The reels are swopped [sic]

> and new ones purchased from time to time so that a new series is always on tap when a town is played the second time.[6]

Like Morris, many of the roadshowmen mentioned in *The Moving Picture World* during the mid-teens shared certain practices with Robert Southard a generation later. They often traveled on circuits, regularly returning to communities during a season; they used schoolhouses, stores, and portable tents as screening sites; and they relied on what was called "old" film purchased by the reel, film that periodically needed to be replaced. Hence Thomas Morris of West Point, Kentucky, showed up in Louisville in October 1915 to buy 100 reels of "old stuff" for his road shows.[7] This recycling of prints means that there is no way to even estimate how long certain films remained in circulation once they passed into the hands of itinerant exhibitors. Robert Southard, for instance, was still screening Chaplin Mutual shorts (produced in 1916-1917) in the early 1930s.

Judging from the material I've cited, traveling exhibition was alive and well, if not actually flourishing in the region (and in other parts of rural America) during the mid-teens. Then, toward the end of 1916, references to this activity in *The Moving Picture World* virtually stop. "Picture Shows Become Commodity," announced an article in October 1916, meaning that

> the moving picture theater has become established as a fixture at almost every four-corners settlement in the country. They are no longer novelties, and that means the man who once could set out with horses and wagon, projecting machine and a folding screen, with a few assorted reels of rain-shot films, is no longer certain to gather a crowd in the rural communities. It is a small town indeed in this day and age which does not boast something in the way of a moving picture theater, and when such a place is found there is usually a reason for the absence of the plant in the shape of a street car line or a good road to a nearby point where a first class house is to be found.[8]

Case closed, it seems. Of course, *The Moving Picture World* had good reason to note—even to celebrate—the saturation of rural America with picture shows, appearing at every crossroads like so many country stores. This trade journal was designed for exhibitors, including, most notably, regional amusement companies, theater circuits, and independent owner-operators. Maybe, then, *The Moving Picture World* could be so confident about the end of small-scale traveling exhibition because this demise fit neatly into a compelling, self-congratulatory narrative of how the movies became *fixed* in America, how a novelty attraction became the fifth or tenth largest "industry" in the United States, and how the most remote provinces and the most cosmopolitan metropolis came to share a common body of stories and stars. I doubt, however, that itinerant exhibitors suddenly disappeared from the South as quickly as they seem to have disappeared from the pages of *The Moving Picture World*. More likely, the rural itinerary and the "old" films screened by the traveling exhibitor took him or her under the radar of *The Moving Picture World,* which was aiming increasingly higher.

Unfortunately, we don't know much at all about traveling exhibition during the later silent era in the United States at large and in states like Kentucky and Tennessee in particular.[9] Kathy Fuller does, however, indicate one important line of inquiry concerning the 1920s when she correlates the continuation of traveling exhibition and the density of theaters in different regions of the United States. "The relative paucity of nickelodeons in the small-town South," she argues, meant "itinerant exhibitors continued to circulate among small-town lodge halls and school auditoriums into the 1920s, long after traveling movie shows had been squeezed out of northeastern markets."[10] On somewhat similar grounds, a case can be made that there was an even greater potential market in the South for traveling exhibitors *after* the introduction of sound, about the time that Robert Southard began exhibiting films.

Itinerant Exhibition in the 1930s

The cost of equipping theaters for sound coupled with the devastating effects of the Depression meant that the number of movie theaters in the United States open for business dropped dramatically in the early 1930s. According to *The Film Daily Yearbook,* by 1933 only 66% of the theaters in the country were wired for sound and open for business, and the situation was much worse in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee, where more than half the theaters were closed. "No area of rural America escaped the Depression," writes historian Anthony J. Badger, "money for necessities was scarce, for luxuries non-existent."[11] Notwith-

standing widespread unemployment, destitution, and a particularly devastated rural economy (and notwithstanding the increasing availability of radio entertainment), the loss of so many movie theaters created a potential opening for itinerant film exhibitors.[12]

There is no question but that Robert Southard and his brother found a steady if not especially lucrative market for their screenings in Arkansas and Kentucky in these years, and Southard's diaries offer a vivid glimpse into an otherwise invisible network of traveling shows that featured silent movies, talkies, or mixed bills of movies and live performance. On his travels in Arkansas during 1933, for example, Southard comes upon (and sometimes trades films with) a "Wop showman" who said he was from Chicago but had Tennessee license plates; the touring Spitler twins (on whom he unloads a worn-out print of Chaplin's *The Count*); a family that exhibits talkies using a not very good "mostly homemade apparatus"; Ed Smith's Tent Show; and a Mr. Thompson, who set up his show in a field, screening a serial along with a print of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* selling candy and attracting patrons by giving away a watch. Sometimes competing for the same audiences, sometimes overlapping in the same territory, sometimes offering quite different attractions, these shows were part of what appears to have been a lively, fluid, entrepreneurial, mobile entertainment culture.

But where else besides Southard's diaries can we find any trace of these Depression-era practices? In deciding which periodicals to check, I took my cue from Southard himself, who notes that when he and his brother wanted to buy a used tent in the Spring of 1933, they ran the following advertisement in *Billboard,* the self-styled "World's Foremost Amusement Weekly":

> WANTED — TENT APPROXIMATELY 30x40; also films, Jesse James, West-erns. Comedies and Specials. Preston Southard, Russellville, Ark.

This small ad from April 15, 1933 is the only reference to the Southards' traveling moving-picture show in *Billboard* for that entire year. (Indeed, this ad is the *only* piece of independently published evidence from the 1930s I have been able to locate that makes any reference to the Southard traveling show.) Once they bought their tent, they didn't advertise again in the magazine's want-ads, and their show never appears in *Billboard*'s quite extensive weekly listing of entertainers on the road, where it would have been lumped with other "Miscellaneous" attractions—a relatively

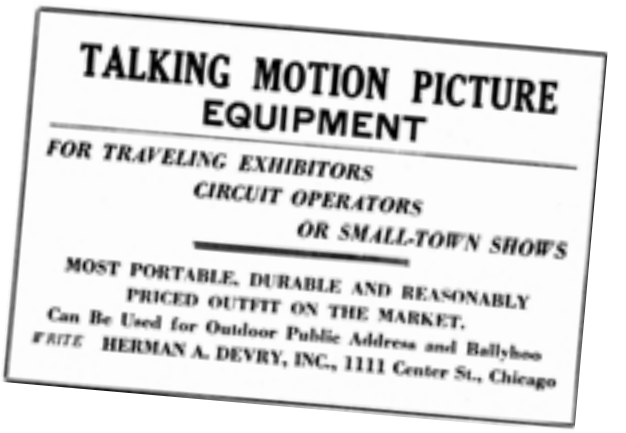
SOUND MOVIES

GIVE YOUR SHOWS

SOCK!

. . . and RCA Victor quality equipment produces the best results

YOU don't have to be sold on sound motion pictures . . . you *know* it gets results. It pulls them in at trade shows . . . expositions . . . fairs . . . carnivals Get the full facts . . . and how movies get money for you.


TALKING MOTION PICTURE EQUIPMENT

FOR TRAVELING EXHIBITORS
CIRCUIT OPERATORS
OR SMALL-TOWN SHOWS

MOST PORTABLE, DURABLE AND REASONABLY PRICED OUTFIT ON THE MARKET.
Can Be Used for Outdoor Public Address and Ballyhoo
WRITE HERMAN A. DEVRY, INC., 1111 Center St., Chicago

Billboard ads target traveling exhibitors

small category that included all shows that were not carnivals or circuses, nor wild west, repertoire, burlesque, minstrel, dramatic and musical shows, live vaudeville or nightclub acts. Only very rarely does the weekly list of 40 or 50 "Miscellaneous" attractions include a self-described moving picture outfit, like Cook's All-Talkies & Vaudeville Show (playing Townsend, Virginia, in June 1933).[13]

Besides the weekly listing of show routes, the only section in *Billboard* in which the business of traveling exhibition surfaces is in the advertisements, including display ads for portable "talking motion picture equipment," which indicate that there was a market for portable projectors and that there were certain recognized non-theatrical options for moving picture exhibitors. Much more suggestive are the 10 or so classified ads each week that *Billboard* grouped under the categories, "M.P. Accessories for Sale" and "M.P. Films for Sale." Here we find evidence of showmen looking to acquire or unload equipment and films and suppliers scattered across the United States who catered to the traveling exhibition market: the Zenith Film & Supply Company of New York City, for example, and the National Equipment Company of Duluth, Minnesota, as well as Finley's Film Exchange of Norfolk, Arkansas, E. L. Falks of Plainview, Texas, and the Monarch Theater Supply Company of Memphis, Tennessee. (In fact, Robert Southard purchased films from Monarch in 1933, as well as from companies in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Maumee, Ohio.)

These outfits specialized in "old" film, described in the following ways:

- "Silent films for sale—one dollar per reel"
- "Fast-action Western and stunt features, Slapstick Comedies and Cartoons, Silent or Talkies"
- "Six-reel Western Electric recording starring Richard Talmadge, perfect stunt thriller, with load of advertising, $58.00"
- "Features $5.00; Comedies $2.00"
- "Jesus of Nazareth—Story of Life of Christ, singing effects."
- "5-Reel Uncle Tom's Cabin, A-1 shape"
- "300 reels of 35mm film. Features. Western. Comedy. Scenic. Cartoons."
- "All-Talkie Roadshow Specials at sacrifice —Six-reel Westerns, $25; Convict's Retribution, $75; Ten Nights Barroom, $100; Medical Lecture complete with booklets; Hygiene Reels and Main Feature, $200; Two-Reel Comedies, Cartoons, Novelties, $7.50 Reel. Disk recorded Westerns and Shorts, $5.00 Reel; Silent Action and Western Features, $7.50; Odd Thousand-Foot Silent Reels, $1.00"

At the very least *Billboard*'s classified ads for motion pictures indicate the going rates for "old" film in 1933 and the relative value of silent film vis-à-vis "all-talkies." More significantly, the advertisements suggest the type of moving pictures in circulation outside the film industry's theatrical distribution network, movies that could have an extremely long shelf life: classic exploitation fare (the "Hygiene Reels"), religious pictures (*Jesus of Nazareth*), time-honored standbys (*Ten Nights in a Bar Room, Uncle Tom's Cabin*), and, above all, cartoons, comedy shorts, and Westerns.[14] Much more than Hollywood's prestige product, these films likely constituted "The Movies" for the audiences serviced by Southard and other traveling exhibitors during the heart of the Depression.

But what about later in the 1930s? *The Film Daily Yearbook* indicates that 30% more theaters were open in the South in 1937 than in 1933. Judging solely by the number of movie theaters in operation, we might expect to find fewer opportunities for traveling exhibitors at the end than at the beginning of the decade. However, if we take *Billboard* as our guide, by 1939, when Robert Southard had focused all his efforts on a relatively small area in Western Kentucky, the business of itinerant film exhibition across the United States was booming.

On June 17, 1939, *Billboard* introduced a regular section devoted to what it called "Non-Theatrical Films," claiming that there were "35,000 spots in the country where a roadshowman is welcome and able to exhibit films without competition to regular 35mm theater exhibitors."[15] This weekly page covering film exhibition in "theaterless communities," institutional sites, churches, schools, resorts, and even nightclubs, included ads from 16mm and 35mm distributors, rental libraries, and equipment suppliers; also included were a question-and-answer column, feature articles, updates on products and personalities, and a survey of new motion picture releases intended for this specific market. Informing virtually all the copy on *Billboard*'s "Non-Theatrical Films" page is the ardent belief that traveling exhibition offers manifold opportunities for

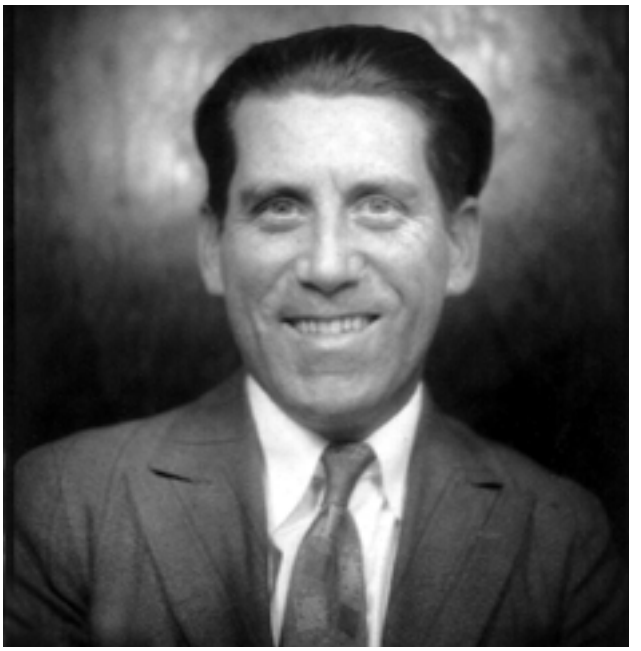
both the novice showman and the experienced entrepreneur—hence regularly running ads that announce "Get Into the Road Show Business" (Ideal Pictures of Chicago) or "Start Your Own Road Show" (Southern Visual of Memphis). By providing weekly coverage, *Billboard* set out to promote and professionalize this burgeoning zone of the amusement industry, opening up a discursive site in which otherwise undocumented practices were acknowledged, and working practitioners were encouraged to go public with their questions, testimonials, and grand plans.

In its 1939 columns, *Billboard* identifies several distinct types of itinerant exhibition: shows under the auspices of schools, churches, and institutions like orphanages and penitentiaries; shows sponsored by small-town merchants; and shows staged by "lone wolf" barnstorming exhibitors. In all cases, the preferred goal is to "build up a good circuit," and *Billboard* is replete with examples of successful circuitry, like Perry's Better Movies, operating out of Coffeyville, Kansas; the Mayflower Motion Picture Service, with circuits planned for Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont; and William Wilkinson, a "veteran colored showman" based in Memphis, who reports that for 15 years he has traveled Kentucky and Tennessee playing "mostly Negro schools," until by the summer of 1939 he boasts of simultaneously having four different moving-picture units on the road. (More information about traveling African-American exhibitors like Wilkinson would dramatically alter current assessments of the "race-movie" industry.) In fact, *Billboard* mentions a host of individual exhibitors, to be found working across much of the United States from Maine to Arkansas, Brooklyn to Las Vegas. A significant number of these roadshows combine moving pictures with vaudeville performances; others target very specific markets with their films. William Baker, for instance, traveled through Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico with a "two-hour show of hunting and fishing" films and a "portable tank of live fish for a lobby or store-window display."[16]

While the material in *Billboard* attests to the continued drawing power of B-Westerns and silent films and to the viability of 35mm prints for traveling shows, 16mm had definitely become the format of choice by 1939. Distributors like Nu-Art Films (New York City), Bussa Film Exchange (Friendship, Ohio), William Kopp (Minneapolis), Films Incorporated (Chicago), and Remington Quality Pictures (Cincinnati) offered a wide range of 16mm product. This range is also evident in *Billboard*'s regular column devoted to "New and Recent Releases," which surveyed industrials, foreign feature films, re-issued Poverty Row movies, travelogues, and cartoons, as well as films designed for the classroom. Distributor ads during this period might highlight six new Tim McCoy Westerns or *Jesse James under the Black Flag,* but they are just as likely to push Bing Crosby shorts, *Tarzan and the Green Goddess, Road to Ruin* (a sex-hygiene/vice film), *Thine is the Kingdom* (a "beautiful Biblical subject"), *Dealers in Death* (an exposé of the munitions industry), or *Romance and Riches,* starring Cary Grant.

At the same time, *Billboard* strongly encouraged the exhibitor himself to become a filmmaker, for "the roadshowman who knows how to handle a 16mm camera has a mint within his reach." In fact, the advice column on the very first "Non-Theatrical Films" page argues that presenting "local newsreels"—footage of crowds, civic events, baseball games, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and so on—is a surefire way of drumming up business, especially if the exhibitor can "slip in" paid advertising plugs "gently among the other local shots." Later articles describe exhibitor-filmmakers in Missouri, Cape Cod, and Florida, and elaborate on how best to film fairs, conventions, and dog shows, as well as public-works projects and political campaigns.[17]

As this brief survey suggests, *Billboard*'s Non-Theatrical Films section expands and problematizes what is meant by "itinerant film exhibition" in the 1930s. For one thing, *Billboard's* definition of this "new" field makes room for a type of non-theatrical show that was very common in Kentucky and probably elsewhere throughout the Depression: the public screening of films produced and distributed by, among other companies, Chevrolet, Ford, and Studebaker, John Deere and Allis-Chambers farm equipment, American Airlines, and Champion spark plugs. Such films were shown by traveling exhibitors not only at retail outlets but also at schools and other public buildings. And then there were the various non-commercial moving pictures provided by church missionaries or state health and welfare agencies. While I don't mean to conflate "tractor" films, instructional travelogues, Monogram Westerns, religious propaganda, and MGM star vehicles, the entire range of non-theatrical film ought to be taken into account if we want to gain a more full and complex sense of the history of itinerant film exhibition in the United States, as well as a better feel for the presence of the movies in everyday life—particularly rural or small-town life—during the 1930s.



Left: A ticket for entry
Right: Undated portrait of Southard

The Significance of Robert Southard

Articles, ads, and news items from *The Moving Picture World* and *Billboard* help to fill in the history of traveling film exhibition in the United States, and provide a context for Robert Southard's roadshows through Arkansas and Kentucky during the 1930s. From this perspective, Southard's practices don't seem quite so idiosyncratic; other showmen, for example, probably offered similar programs and traveled comparable routes. Yet Southard's daily notes allow us to reconstruct his programs and routes in remarkable and, as far as I have been able to determine, unprecedented detail. Given how little we know about the day-in, day-out business of film exhibition (theatrical as well as itinerant), Southard's diary is of unquestionable value as a primary document in the cultural history of American film during the Depression. For that reason alone he is well worth our attention.

But what is it about Robert Southard that makes his diary particularly compelling or significant? For me, at least, it is not the nostalgia aura of archaic quaintness or romantic wanderlust that a figure like Southard might evoke.[18] Nor is it that Southard epitomizes the near-mythic status that Mark Swartz assigns to the Depression-era itinerant exhibitor: "The traveling show in its many different incarnations and variations," Swartz proposes, "stands as a testament to the ingenuity, business savvy, and adaptability of the American people at their best."[19] By the logic of Swartz's claim, Robert Southard becomes our free-moving, entrepreneurial better self, a movie-man not beholden to the oligopoly, not given over to chain-store tactics. This seems too heavy a symbolic burden for the itinerant film exhibitor to bear, no matter how much we may admire his work ethic and road smarts.

Perhaps, instead, Southard stands for the perseverance of the Southern and the local in an age and an industry dominated by the national and the metropolitan. Southard's practices could be called "regional" in that he found a market for his shows in particular areas of Arkansas and Kentucky—yet he did not offer programs that were somehow unique to or directly informed by this region or by the specific localities he visited. Southard did his own programming and advertising, but he was not a latter-day version of the pre-nickelodeon period's "creative" exhibitor who packaged films into multiple-media shows. For example, there is no evidence at all to suggest that Southard incorporated—or exploited—local culture: no documented use of live performance in his shows, no "local newsreels" of the sort championed by *Billboard,* not even any locally connected advertising matter. In fact, his widow recently told me that he was especially proud of developing a portable sound system that allowed him to play a whole range of popular, contemporary recordings for an hour before each screening, turning his tent show into a sort of traveling radio station. Further, there is also no proof that Southard offered (or even wanted to offer) his Kentucky and

Licenses and business cards document Southard's various operations

Arkansas audiences any kind of "alternative" exhibition space, a space that might allow for, even encourage, audiences to contest "the movies."

If Southard's diaries suggest anything that seems specific to rural Kentucky or to some version of the South during the Depression, it is not in his exhibition practices but rather in the moviegoing experience that he so matter-of-factly and vividly evokes. His entries from the early 1930s, in particular, offer thumbnail glimpses of a time when and a place where moviegoing was not merely a mundane, regularized activity:

> *August 10, 1931* (at a one-room school near Triplet, Kentucky): Someone told us that a 'tuff' gang from down below was coming to tear up our show tonight. After show had been going on awhile a gang rode up on horses. I was out front watching truck and door. They certainly gave me a good 'look over' and I returned it. Everything went smoothly without any trouble.
>
> *November 25, 1931* (at the Little Muddy School): An old hillbilly wanted to know if I was Tom Mix. We had Tom Mix pictures advertised.

And so I find I am concluding the way I began, with anecdotes from Robert Southard's diaries.[20] As much as I am sure of the film-historical value of Southard's carefully kept daily records, it is, in all honesty, his anecdotes that I find fascinating. (As do friends of mine who aren't film scholars, who hear in these anecdotes kernels of screenplays and snatches from an everyday life that otherwise seems so inaccessible.) Even as Southard's accounts strikingly pin down particulars, their elliptical or fragmentary or simply surprising quality creates a space for—and encourages—interpretation, opens up historiographical possibilities. Following the road traveled by Robert Southard complicates and enriches our sense of the history of American film in the 1930s and 1940s, a history that needs to take more into account the cultural power and presence of the movies beyond the screen, and outside of the theater.

Gregory A. Waller is a professor and chair of the Department of English at the University of Kentucky.

Notes

1. All information about Southard's exhibition practices and all direct quotations attributed to Southard come from his show diaries and from a small collection of his letters, both now archived at Western Kentucky University. My thanks to Pat Hodges of WKU for her invaluable assistance and to Joan Southard, Robert's daughter, who has been kind enough to share with me other material that belonged to her father. A new cache of Southard material came to light in May 2002, when Robert's surviving daughters decided to auction off a large number of posters and other promotional material, as well as some 100 reels of 35mm nitrate

film that had been stored first in Robert's home, then in a barn on the family farm. Certain of my illustrations are drawn from Southard material purchased by the Special Collections Library at the University of Kentucky. Turner Classic Movies purchased the 35mm film and is currently having it examined to see what preservation work needs to be undertaken.

2. A not uncommon social fable, as Peter Stanfield demonstrates in *Hollywood, Westerns and the 1930s: The Lost Trail* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press 2001).
3. For information on early traveling exhibition in the United States, see Calvin Pryluck, "The Itinerant Movie Show and the Development of the Film Industry," *Journal of the University Film and Video Association* 25, no. 4 (1983): 11-22; Charles Musser with Carol Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures: Lyman H. Howe and the Forgotten Era of Traveling Exhibition, 1880-1920* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991); Charles Musser, "Introducing Cinema to the American Public: The Vitascope in the United States, 1896-7," in *Moviegoing in America: A Sourcebook in the History of Film Exhibition,* ed. Gregory A. Waller (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2002), 13-26; Kathryn H. Fuller, *At the Picture Show: Small-Town Audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); and Gregory A. Waller, "Motion Pictures and Other Entertainment at Chautauqua," in *Cinema at the Turn of the Century,* ed. Roberta Pearson, Claire Dupré la Tour, and André Gaudreault (Quebec: Editions Nota Bene, 1999), 81-89. There is also an impressive body of scholarship on traveling and fairground exhibition during the silent era outside the United States. See, for example, Guido Convents, "Motion Picture Exhibitors on Belgian Fairgrounds: Unknown Aspects of Traveling Exhibition in a European Country, 1896-1914," *Film History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 238-49; Pierre Veronneau, "The Creation of a Film Culture by Traveling Exhibitors in Rural Quebec Prior to World War I," *Film History* 6, no. 2 (1994): 250-61; and Aldo Bernardi, *Gli ambulanti: Cinema Italiano Delle Origini* (Udine: La Cineteca del Friuli, 2001).
4. *The Moving Picture World,* 14 May 1914: 987.
5. *The Moving Picture World,* 27 December 1913, 1563; *The Moving Picture World,* 15 May 1915: 1119.
6. *The Moving Picture World,* 17 July 1915: 521.
7. *The Moving Picture World,* 2 October 1915: 105.
8. *The Moving Picture World,* 7 October 1916: 111.
9. Eric Schaefer's *"Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!" A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999) is a notable exception, though it looks at a quite different type of road show.
10. Fuller, *At the Picture Show,* 32.
11. Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-40* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 18.
12. Douglas Gomery makes this point in relation to Midwestern states like Iowa and Kansas in *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 12-13.
13. *Billboard,* 17 June 1933: 54.
14. The information quoted above comes from a sample of *Billboard* ads for 1933: 4 February: 47; 4 March: 47; 18 March: 47; 22 July: 47; and 12 August: 49.
15. *Billboard,* 17 June 1939: 27.
16. *Billboard,* 29 July 1939: 25; *Billboard,* 16 September 1939: 25; *Billboard,* July 1939: 26; *Billboard,* 12 August 1939: 25; and *Billboard,* 5 August 1939: 25.
17. *Billboard,* 28 October 1939: 27; *Billboard,* 24 June 1939: 28. The best collection of extant local films from this period that I am aware of are the "Movies of Local People" shot by North Carolina filmmaker H. Lee Waters between 1936-1942, now housed at Duke University. See the documentary on Waters produced by Tom Whiteside, *The Cameraman Has Visited Our Town* (1989).
18. Discussing a traveling exhibitor in Michigan in 1915, *The Moving Picture World* waxed poetic: "in the traveling, portable picture show there are chances of profit and pleasure combined . . . one can almost be a gypsy and very far from a tramp and have all the pleasures of either when he is making his living." *The Moving Picture World,* 12 June 1915: 1802.
19. Mark E. Swartz, "Moving Pictures on the Move," *Journal of American Culture* 9, no. 3 (1987): 1.
20. Even *The Moving Picture World* has its share of telling anecdotes, most often buried deep in the columns detailing the exhibition business around the country, for example: "Arthur Burch, 50 years of age, the proprietor of a tent motion picture show at Underwood, Indiana, was severely wounded by a knife in the hand of a one-armed man at that place recently. Thurman Bobo, the picture man's assailant, was cutting his way into the tent when the trouble started, culminating in Burch's injury" (*The Moving Picture World,* 9 November 1913: 632).

Abstract Gregory A. Waller: "Robert Southard and the History of Traveling Film Exhibition." Focusing on the day-to-day practices of Robert Southard, a traveling showman who worked rural Kentucky and Arkansas during and after the Depression, this essay re-examines the history of itinerant film exhibition in the United States, particularly during the 1930s and1940s.

Amy Lawrence

Counterfeit Motion: The Animated Films of Eadweard Muybridge

"Muybridge" (as a brand or a category) has become an icon of technology, his nineteenth-century images of motion invoked to signify the first halting steps of digital technology and the Internet, "the birth of the new." We can find Muybridge's images reproduced in advertising, on the covers of operating manuals for computer software, and on CDs of "modern" music. But more often than not, Muybridge serves as a symbol of nostalgia for technologies that never existed. It is possible that his work is best known today in the form of moving images, despite the fact that Eadweard Muybridge never made a film.

Muybridge's motion studies are composite plates made up of a series of photographic images laid out in grids on a page. Each image can be seen as a single photograph, yet because they are presented in a series, the meaning of each photograph also comes from its relationship to the others. Because of this, people have read the serialized images as Muybridge's premonition of cinema. According to this interpretation, motion is immanent in each layout; each layout points toward a time when the series will be reconstituted as a loop; each loop will document a single visual gesture; and the "meaning" (which is motion) will come not only from the photographs and their order but from the blank spaces in between. These are the elements that make cinema possible.

Since the early 1970s, filmmakers have transformed Muybridge's serial photographs from the 1870s and 1880s into short animated films. Each of the films I shall discuss is based on the analytic or "instantaneous" photographs Muybridge shot in the veterinary yard at the University of Pennsylvania in the summers of 1884 and 1885 and published in the eleven volumes of *Animal Locomotion* (1887).[1] However, there is a pronounced difference in the way various filmmakers invoke Muybridge-as-icon.

The films based on Muybridge's work gravitate toward two poles: those that tend toward cinema (as we know it), obsessively recreating the moment when a still photograph becomes a moving photograph, and those that question photography's privileged position within cinema. Because their interests and methods diverge, I will refer to these two camps, respectively, as documentary filmmakers and animators. The films I will be referring to as "animated" foreground the conditions of their production. This is easiest to see when the films are made up of drawings, but even when these films recycle photographic material, the photograph's status as image and the process by which movement is created are highlighted and questioned rather than naturalized.[2] The documentary filmmakers, on the other hand, disguise the extent of their own labor in order to attribute the movement in their films to Muybridge. Made up of genuine Muybridge photographs, these (re)constructions are only misleading as a whole: modern reproductions that masquerade as historical artifacts.

The first film created out of re-photographing Muybridge, David Hanson's 1972 *Homage to Muybridge,* establishes the basic method for making Muybridge move. It also suggests some of the elements that may

Film Quarterly, Vol. no. 57, Issue no. 2, pages 15-25. ISSN: 0015-1386. © 2004 by The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Send requests for permission to reprint to: Rights and Permissions, University of California Press, Journals Division, 2000 Center Street, Suite 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223.

have drawn filmmakers to Muybridge in the first place. The film begins with a close-up of one of the still images from the plate "Child Carrying Flowers to a Woman." After a cut to black, the entire series of photographs from this plate appear one by one, displayed horizontally across the screen. The climax of this introductory section is the first "moving" image we see: "Woman Turning and Walking Upstairs." The illusion of motion is created by re-photographing one image at a time, "reading" the plate for us left to right, top to bottom, and reconstituting each series of images as a sequence in time rather than as a layout in space.

Homage to Muybridge also reveals how filmmakers create "Muybridge"—commenting on/distorting/inventing an image of the historical figure—in this case through the images they have selected. Out of the hundreds of photographs of animals, men, women, and children in *Animal Locomotion, Homage to Muybridge* focuses exclusively on nude women. In between the motion sequences are title cards—"Woman picking up skirt," "Woman picking up Child"—aggressively emphasizing that it is only women (naked and partially dressed) who will be the primary objects of the film's attentions. By framing the moving image with Belle Époque graphic frills in a style allegedly reminiscent of silent film title-cards, the film presents Muybridge's photographs as "fractured flickers" complete with burlesque-style music. The effect is simultaneously superior and prurient, as if we were looking at a live-action edition of *The Police Gazette*.

Two texts involved in a more serious investigation of the issues raised by the non-fiction creations of Muybridge in motion are the feature-length documentary *Eadweard Muybridge: Zoopraxographer* (Thom Anderson, 1974) and the laserdisc *Muybridge: Motion Studies* by James Sheldon (1991).

Anderson's film is a biographical account of Muybridge's career with voice-over narration and modern day recreations that allow for the interrogation of the definition of cinema itself. Sheldon's laserdisc was designed to be educational and interactive, a means of making all of Muybridge's published works, including the 781 plates from the eleven volumes of *Animal Locomotion,* available outside the few libraries and archives where they have been previously held. Both films construct cinematic movement out of the photographs, Anderson by re-photographing (à la *Homage),* and Sheldon by scanning selected plates and then using computer imaging to smooth out the motion.

The main differences between Sheldon and Anderson lie in their attitudes toward their own methods and projects. Sheldon pursues perfection; Anderson highlights "flaws." Sheldon exalts timelessness; Anderson insists on history. Sheldon genuflects at the altar of science; Anderson is an iconoclast. Most of all, Sheldon believes in Muybridge. Anderson does not.

For Sheldon cinema is inevitable. It is Sheldon's project to reveal what was always there, the cinematic embedded in Muybridge's work. Sheldon and his collaborators use computer technology to erase traces of the apparatus and create the illusion of direct contact with an essential "real." The purity and clarity of movement in Sheldon assumes a perfect synchronism with contemporary moving image production. Whenever possible, the figures move as smoothly as if photographed by a modern motion-picture camera at the standard sound speed of 24 frames per second.

The time elapsed between images in Muybridge's work, however, was unpredictable; some of the plates reproduced in *Animal Locomotion* offer as few as twelve, eight, or six photographs per second. This is most pronounced in the earliest motion studies made in Palo Alto; later, at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1880s, Muybridge used an electronic motor to synchronize the multiple cameras for each series. The results were still far from perfect. Marta Braun has calculated that between 30% and 40% of the plates have "mistakes" (if the re-creation of motion is the aim): the time between exposures is uneven, pictures are printed out of sequence or repeated to fill in for damaged negatives.[3] The only way to make the motion smooth is to invent new images to fill out the empty spaces.

Sheldon and his collaborators cover over the gaps by using computer imaging to create what are termed in animation "in-betweens." (For example, an animator could insert one shot or several between Shot A and Shot B, based on how much time the artist felt should be spent progressing from the pose in A to that in B. The possible number of in-betweens is infinite.) Through the process of "morphing" (using software to calculate a midpoint between Image A and Image B, resulting in a mathematically exact "in-between") an endless number of intermediate images can be produced to fill in the gaps between Muybridge's original photos. Eight original frames that create a jerky movement when filmed can be made into 24 frames of gradually changing movement. However, by doing so, Sheldon inevitably disguises the "mistakes" or "inadequacies" of Muybridge's work and obscures the possibility of steps not taken. In fact, as a laserdisc,

Sheldon's digitally produced moving pictures are not a "film" at all—but this fact is submerged in the cinematic perfectionism at the heart of the project.

Anderson, on the other hand, working in the 1970s with basic cinematic technology (16mm), re-creates the creation of cinema itself. In the process, he blocks any assumption of inevitability. Anderson begins with still images (as Hanson does) then proceeds to show awkward, jerky movements unfolding at different rates of speed, generating suspense until well into the film when, suddenly, a woman bends to pick up a broom and the timing is exactly "right": "natural" movement at the "proper" speed. Rather than privilege modern cinema as destiny, however, Anderson does not stay with the "correct" speed once he has arrived at it, but continues to experiment with fast speed, slow speed, and split-screens—showing us new, different, *other* kinds of cinematic motion. As was true of silent film, which could be projected at various speeds, motion in Anderson's work is not discovered or recovered but cinematically produced, just as the rate of motion is not technically pre-determined (i.e. 24 frames a second) but is always a choice. Mary Ann Doane asserts that, "In a medium so strongly applauded for its ability to store or record time, *it becomes difficult to think time as figurable, manipulable*" but, despite his dedication to photographic realism, that is precisely what Anderson does.[4]

In making obvious the "creation" of movement, Anderson leaves space for the flaws, inserting frames of black to signal the uneven gaps between exposures, at times creating the effect of a strobe. For instance, if Muybridge provides eight images for an action that takes a second, Anderson uses frames of black to fill out the 24 frames per second. This choice makes visible a fact of cinema that is otherwise impossible to see: the alternation of darkness and light, image and non-image, which is fundamental to projection. Some theorists have argued that the viewer cannot see the dark space between moving images, but the flicker in some of Anderson's recreations provides a visible reminder.[5]

Anderson's film is deeply concerned with the history to be found in every nineteenth-century image. As Doane points out, "The camera is rarely still in Anderson's film, even when it confronts the enormous range of Muybridge's work in still photography, where the camera insistently moves into or out from the photographs, isolating details or placing them in context."[6] Anderson interrogates the photographs, using the cinema-camera to force meaning out of the silent, enigmatic, still image—on the assumption that meaning will be inseparable from the motion exercised upon it and the motion "hidden" within. In a sadistic narrative à la Laura Mulvey, the image will be *made* to yield its meaning just as it will be *made* to move.

In addition to interrogating the images themselves, Anderson inserts Muybridge's photographs into a larger conception of history, a history that is itself historically contingent. A beneficiary of the historical revisionism of the 1970s, Anderson views nineteenth-century America as shot through with robber barons, racist expansionism, labor exploitation, genocide, fraud, and snake-oil salesmen of all kinds. Redolent of the 1970s' rejection of father figures and its overall resistance to the construction(s) of patriarchy (Muybridge as a "father of cinema"), Anderson's history presupposes biography-as-pathology.

For Anderson, Muybridge's constant reinvention of self becomes a litany of deceptive practices. His endless name changes (from Edward to Eadweard, Muggeridge to Muggridge to Muybridge) become evidence of self-mythologizing, a practice presented as indistinguishable from charlatanism. The instability of his name, its essential fictiveness, is confirmed by Muybridge's use of the show-biz name "Helios" when he first sets up as a professional photographer, and the assumption of "Eduardo Santiago Muybridge" when he goes to Central America after his trial for murder.

For his part, Sheldon recognizes Muybridge's multiple identities, referring to him as "the nineteenth-century photographer, entrepreneur, scientific explorer of animal locomotion, and inventor." But he brushes aside all the myths and the stories that lend themselves to myth in order to construct Muybridge's life as having a single trajectory, a single goal, culminating in technological triumph (a myth in its own right):

> We may know his photographs of trotting horses even before we know his name. We may have heard of the exotic components of his life—perhaps the bet about how horses run, the trial for murder of his wife's lover, or even the several changes of his name—but may not be fully aware of Muybridge's role in the development of technical photographic equipment, the extent of his exhaustive study of motion, or his part in the development of motion pictures.[7]

Anderson's historicity is philosophically anathema to Sheldon, who categorically denies any position for himself (or his subject) within history. "In Muybridge's

Simulated camera motion prefigures contemporary special effects

work, the mundane, the commonplace event, the average person, is enriched with a beauty and majesty that seems timeless."[8]

In a perfect rhetorical gesture, Sheldon claims his authority from Muybridge himself. "I believe the concept of the videodisc, one more technical innovation, would have captivated him. This technology would have made it possible for him to see the entire scope of his all-important studies." He goes on:

> If through videodisc technology the plates could be animated, and thus be seen *as Muybridge's audience saw them* when he showed the plates with his grand invention, the zoopraxiscope (even the word sounds like magic), the contemporary public could finally understand and appreciate the significance of Muybridge's accomplishments.[9]

Thus, according to Sheldon, Muybridge's accomplishments are understandable only through Sheldon's own laserdisc, the New Testament come to fulfill the prophecies of the Old. Teleology erases history; progress is so inexorable, so "already written" (as hindsight shows) that gaps or fissures—contradiction itself—fall by the wayside.

Sheldon's scientism insists on there being "one true path," the "right" speed that reveals (rather than creates) movement, a result achievable solely through the latest technology. It should come as no surprise then that compared with Anderson (or any other reanimator of Muybridge's photographic images) Sheldon's sleight of hand is superior. Every image moves in perfect sound-speed, indistinguishable from cinema-as-we-(now)-know-it.

I do not mean to simply castigate Hanson, Anderson, Sheldon, et al. All three non-fiction works reveal factors unique to Muybridge, some of which would have been difficult to recognize without their re-creations of Muybridge's photographs into cinema—or indeed without a pre-existing concept of cinema. The fact that the figures are centered in each image makes it possible to re-photograph them onto film stock, creating an illusion of motion. This factor also creates an illusion perhaps more astonishing than the illusion of motion within the image: the illusion of a single camera. A contemporary describes Muybridge photographing his motion studies with a "'battery' of from 12 to 24 cameras."[10] These were for the images taken head-on; for the lateral views, "two portable lines of 12 cameras [are] used to produce foreshortened views of the action from the front and back."[11] So for each series of photographs taken from one angle, there are one- or two-dozen cameras, each taking a single image. But when re-recorded and projected, what we see appears to be "an" image from a single point of view.

Even more amazing is that images made with multiple stationary cameras can be used to create not only the illusion of a single camera-eye, but of a *moving* camera-eye, not merely the illusion of movement within the frame but the illusion of *camera* movement. When deer run by trees at the zoo, they are kept centered by what looks like a tracking shot. As a man race-walks, the camera appears to crane up for a high angle view.[12] When the hand in a rare close-up draws a circle with a piece of chalk, the camera seemingly pans back and forth, reframing to keep the circle within the film-frame. We can only ask, "What camera?"

The impossibility of this alleged camera movement (which we can only read as camera movement *after* cinema) is proved in the "rotatory" or circular shots that re-create a movement impossible for an actual motion-picture camera moving in space. The movement is unlike anything observable by the eye; what we see is the uncanny movement of "a" camera circling stationary subjects frozen in time (see cover). Not until

the late 1990s would cinema find a use for this disorienting maneuver: Dayton Taylor re-invented it using computer technology to select a frame at a time from shots taken by 60 different cameras in succession.[13]

Animated films

In film studies, the term "animation" can be applied to any illusion of motion based on the projection of still images at many frames per second. However, such a broad theoretical usage erases the historical specificity of animation as a genre and as a mode of production. It might be more useful here to define animation as a process of making a film one frame at a time. Not only is the timing of the presentation of images variable, but every aspect within an image is subject to manipulation. In other words, in their Muybridge-based "moving pictures" animators interrogate not only how motion is created but the very nature of the image. In the process, photography's centrality to cinema is immediately put into question.

Both Sheldon and Anderson create a direct, unmediated line from Muybridge's analytic photography to motion pictures. In doing so, they make a fundamental error: they assume that "moving pictures" means moving photographs. Sheldon and Anderson seem to believe (as do all the documentarian-reconstructionists) that Muybridge used the zoopraxiscope to re-animate the motion his photographs had stilled. In her groundbreaking essay on Muybridge, Linda Williams refers to "the published photo sequences and the projected movements of these sequences" as if the images in the photographs Muybridge published and those on the zoopraxiscope discs were the same.[14] But the zoopraxiscope does not use photographs, except at a (crucial) remove. It uses—animates—drawings based on photographs. The idea of tracing live-action images would be re-discovered by Dave Fleischer in the 1920s and called "rotoscoping." Used to ensure the "life-like" movement of animated drawings, "rotoscoping" comes closest to being the most accurate term for what Muybridge actually did.

The images on Muybridge's zoopraxiscope discs, however, are far from simple tracings. Moving step by step further from their photographic source, the drawings—done by Edwin Faber—substantially modify and transform the photographs on which they are based.[15] First, they are cosmetically enhanced with color. Second, the figures are excised from their surroundings. The backdrops used by Muybridge in his photography to isolate his figures from space are eliminated altogether on the discs that present figures moving against a blank, unframed expanse of white. Perhaps most importantly, in order to compensate for the projecting-machine's tendency to condense the image much the way an anamorphic lens squeezes the image in various widescreen techniques, the figures are intentionally distorted, elongated, so that the image will appear "natural" when projected. (Clearly "natural" as a category pre-exists the projection of its image.) Jonathan Crary's description of Muybridge's photographs as possessing an "*ungroundedness* and mutable temporality" is even more apt for the drawn images of the zoopraxiscope.[16]

Like the animated films I discuss below, Muybridge's own moving images revealed the need for active intervention on two levels. All animators create the image and create time. Muybridge re-created the image *so that* he could re-create time.

Thus Sheldon's desire to make the images from *Animal Locomotion* move "as Muybridge's audiences saw them" would actually require sacrificing the "moving photograph" for the drawn images of the zoopraxiscope. The film that most closely approximates such an effect is Jules Engel's *Accident* (1977). The series of the running greyhound is copied in pencil and the drawings re-photographed. Engel, however, does not stop with a simple recreation. As the greyhound runs and runs and runs, some unseen force begins to erase him. Unaware, he keeps running. When he is gone, only the blur of his shadow remains, still running.

Where all the non-fiction works read Muybridge's scientific methodology as a kind of modernist minimalism "haunted by an eighteenth-century dream of science,"[17] for Engel these simple elements convey a cavernous, existential despair. The very tools of that science partake of the "being and nothingness" that characterize the dog's condition. Like the greyhound, the photograph is gone, no longer present as itself (what we see is more like the memory of a photograph). But like the dog, the photograph remains visible as a trace—a trace Engel makes literal. Drawing makes erasure possible. Paradoxically, erasure becomes the assertion that drawing is superior in expressiveness to photography *because* it can be erased, altered, made to communicate the filmmaker's very will to alter, to make a mark. In doing so, the film declares the importance of artistic intervention and intentionality.

Accident expands on a technique found in both Sheldon's *Motion Studies* and Anderson's *Eadweard Muybridge: Zoopraxographer*. In the latter two, each

roughly one-second-long gesture is repeated two or three times, as if it was not possible to really see it any other way. Called "cycling" in animation, repeatedly running a fixed number of images in sequence results in a loop—the seemingly uninterrupted repetition of a series of motions. Such repetition is not inherent in Muybridge's layouts, only some of which fit comfortably into a loop. In its simplest form (one that incidentally pays heed to the period when the photographs were taken), the kind of photographic loop featured in Anderson and Sheldon can be found in pre-cinematic devices such as flipbooks. Another pre-cinematic method for creating the illusion of motion was the zoetrope: unlike flipbooks, zoetropes never end. The same action recurs endlessly. The fact that both Sheldon and Anderson rely on the loop makes explicit their shared desire to reenact an originary scene of fascination. While some theorists locate this fascination as the moment in early cinema "when the still image . . . bursts into movement,"[18] by making his entire film a continuous loop, Engel reveals something deeper. In taking a moment in time and turning it into an object that can be owned, controlled, and made to happen again and again, every filmmaker I discuss—documentarians as well as animators—fetishizes the gesture.

In "The Ice House," one of the QuickTime movies included on her CD-Rom *Beyond* (1996), Zoe Beloff echoes Engel's metaphysical preoccupations in considering what this fetishization of a gesture might mean. In the process she demonstrates that digital animation does not need to alter the image in order to question the practice of animating Muybridge. In "The Ice House" an anonymous woman from *Animal Locomotion* raises and lowers a shawl onto her shoulders as she walks forward and backward while the narrator (Beloff) recites the following:

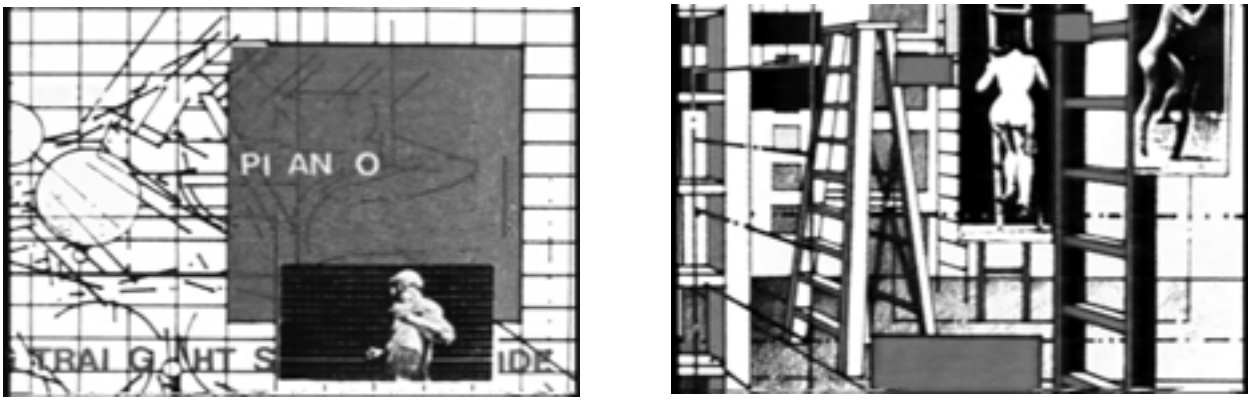
> Canterel described to me how the dead, once aroused, would reproduce with strict exactitude every slightest action performed by them during certain outstanding minutes of their lives. Then without any break they would infinitely repeat the same unvarying series of gestures they had chosen once and for all.[19]

By identifying the woman as dead, Beloff underscores the oddity of "life-like" movement, undermining motion's alleged ability to animate (or "bring to life") the death-like stillness of the photograph. Although the gestures are said to be "chosen" by the person performing them, their "infinite" repetition raises the question of timing. Who is making—and making available to us—this moving image? What ringmaster makes photographs of a dead woman smile and gesture again and again for our/her/his entertainment?

Unlike the rigorous paring down of elements in *Accident* and "The Ice House," most animated films dealing with Muybridge feature a profusion of different *kinds* of images. Both drawings and photographs exist within a single frame and different rates of motion within a single image. These films foreground the coexistence of materially different images and the work of the apparatus in producing different—but simultaneous—illusions of motion.

Through juxtaposition, George Griffin's *Viewmaster* (1976) best thematizes the struggle between photography and animation as traditionally defined. Colorful cartoon characters run by—stick figures, ink-blobs with feet, Jiminy Crickets—a parade from the history of animation. The camera seems to track right, passing the running figures one by one until each group is successively left behind. They may be pursuing or being pursued, but unlike Engel's greyhound who remains centered, these figures are constantly losing ground. No matter how hard they run, they cannot elude cinema, moving pictures in the general sense. In Griffin's words, "Just as the first character reappears and a sense of déjà vu occurs, a cut to a long shot reveals all the characters jogging in place around a circle."[20] Not only have the characters been running in

George Griffin's 1976 *Viewmaster*



Paul Glabicki's *Object Conversations* highlights the design elements of Muybridge's imagery

circles, like the greyhound they are running in place. At the center of this circle, a figure from Muybridge fades in, a moving photographic image of a man running in place. Because he is not revealed until the film's climax it is as if the evolution of animation culminates in photography. Despite animation's demonstrated ability to literally run circles around Muybridge's moving pictures, it is as if it is the destiny of animation, with its infinite variety, its humor, its colors, to be forced to the margins by moving photographs. It is the photographic image that would be the heart of cinema; drawing, the variation.

The image of the running man surrounded by the characters on the circle gives us a loop within a loop, one a loop in time (the same series of steps shown again and again), and the other a "loop" physically splayed in space. The drawn characters are not only running in a circle but *on* a circle, much like the figures on a zoopraxiscope disc.[21] Griffin's film and Muybridge's discs operate on the same principle: the cycling of a limited number of images. (Griffin's entire three-minute film is made up of eight drawings and eleven photographs.[22]) However, the strongest impression left by *Viewmaster* is that it was inevitable that cartoons would be displaced by the superior indexicality and detail of moving photographs.

It is a short step from assuming the superiority of photography to the superiority of the photographic character in the film's implicit narrative. Crary asserts that Muybridge's motion studies could "at least suggest the possibility of novel social/historical intuitions."[23] A colonialist figure, the running man in *Viewmaster* is in representational terms "other" compared to the "lesser" or "less fully realized" categories of beings that surround him (to whom, of course, he is oblivious).[24] Like capital itself, the man is constantly on the move, running/traveling/exploring. Though he is not actually getting anywhere, nevertheless the world literally revolves around this individual white man.

In *Object Conversations* (1985), Paul Glabicki inserts Muybridge's photographs into animated graphic designs to very different effect. Muybridge's photographed people, contained in frames like boxes, repeat their endless motions against Mondrian-style drawn backdrops. The twentieth-century grid, with its bright primary colors, houses Muybridge's nineteenth-century images in black and white, grids embedded in grids. (As Crary says, "how this image of modernity endures."[25]) In this world of abstract color and shape, the black and white photographic people have become objects, the motion-loop a temporal/spiritual grid within the visual/spatial one. In Glabicki's film, the visual grids against which people attempt action (futile, repetitive) are intercut with shots of tools (scissors, anvils), while the soundtrack bombards the viewer with audio-loops of clanging sounds, lists of Italian words, fragments of language. Repetition characterizes every register and any progress the human-photographic figures make (a naked woman climbing a ladder, a man lifting a barbell) is illusory, part of the same cacophony of modernity—simultaneity, fragmentation, chaos—and subject to the same endless cycle.

As in other works, the loop is central, but in Griffin's and Glabicki's films its meaning has been expanded and/or restated in graphic terms (the flat circular disc in the former, repetitive movement within/against different conceptions of the grid in the latter), and in temporal and spatial terms (the photo-loop in the center of the flat disc). In the process, these

animators use Muybridge's photographs to raise issues about cinema's industrial history and/as industrialized modernity.

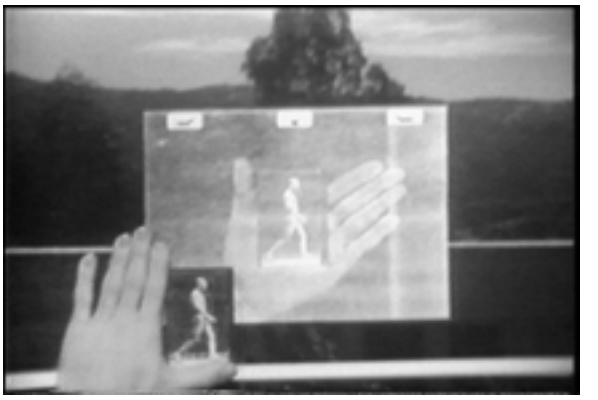
Time and the Materiality of the Image

The coexistence of different media in these films calls attention to 1) the historical coexistence of many forms of imaging, 2) the constructedness of motion for any cinematic image, including photographic, and 3) the materiality of the image. At the risk of stating the obvious: when the materiality of the image changes, so does its capacity for conveying time.

Since photography's conception, theorists have described it as a self-producing technology—the sun drawing its own picture through a photo-chemical process, sun-writing, heliography, the pencil of nature, the model of Benjamin's "mechanical reproduction."[26] Seen as superior in its realism and automaticity to hand-made representations, photography is said to capture time while graphics comment on or interpret it. In some of the films under discussion, what the graphics comment on is the hidden, disguised ways that photography also constructs time.

Any painting or drawing presents us with a condensation of many hours. Hand-made images may lack photographic indexicality, but indexicality is no proof of time. How much time passed during the production of a photograph? What was the shutter speed? *Was* there a shutter? The jerkiness of motion/time as reconstituted (i.e. constructed) by Hanson and Anderson enables us to see how uneven the gaps between Muybridge's images are. Works that present different orders of images simultaneously call attention to competing, divergent, coexisting technologies of image production, each with its own order of time.[27]

The most complex exploration of different kinds of moving images existing in different times despite occupying the same space is *Animus* by Gary Schwartz (1981). Made as a student film (as was Anderson's documentary), Schwartz's animated short overflows with cinematic references, starting with the Edison short *Fred Ott's Sneeze* (1894) and ending with a production still from *Peeping Tom* (1960) featuring a projector and displayed as a strip of film.[28] *Fred Ott's Sneeze* is first presented as a still. Then it moves. We are taken through the Edison film once until the image freezes again at the end. Doane argues that cinema "appears to extract a magical continuity from what is acknowledged as discontinuous" but here there are more ways to play with an image than stopping and starting the illusion of movement.[29] Fred Ott's multiple-generation



Animus by Gary Schwartz (1981)

photograph turns into a color drawing (an example and a demonstration of rotoscoping). When the nature of the image changes, it becomes pliable: a finger (photographic and therefore read as three-dimensional) pushes at the image of Fred Ott, distorting the figure.

Most of *Animus* juxtaposes two different kinds of photographic images, each with its own brand of motion. A series of animated photographs from *Animal Locomotion* shows the boxer Ben Bailey walking—across the girders of a building, the windshield of a car, the palm of a hand, and on a slant as a faded image against white nothingness. As we look at the girders of a half-built skyscraper, a photograph of Bailey "walking" (a cycle of photographs) moves across the girders to the sound of footsteps. Of course Bailey doesn't walk; the photographs of Bailey moving are themselves moved.

In the next sequence, Bailey's photograph "walks" around the interior of a car being driven on a freeway. The smoothness of the movement within the photograph cycle contrasts with the jerkiness of the stop-motion photography that shows us the inside of the car and the view through the windshield. Even more than in the skyscraper sequence where the "outside" world was basically still, here the "moving" world that surrounds the Bailey photo(s) is distorted by the same process that makes their motion possible. The effect of the apparatus is thus made visible where it is most taken for granted—throwing into doubt the "real" world surrounding the "fake," "moving" pictures.

In "Eclipse of the Spectacle" Jonathan Crary identifies "the TV screen and car windshield" as motion-filled frames that "reconciled visual experience with the velocities and discontinuities of the marketplace." In a description that applies to *Object Conversations* as much as to *Animus,* Crary calls the screen and windshield "apertures that frame the subject's transit

through streams of disjunct objects and affects, across disintegrating and hyperabundant surfaces."[30]

By juxtaposing Muybridge's space-less images (the characteristic grid backdrop carved away so that only the human figure remains) with the mock-infinity promised first by the view of the city from the skyscraper and then by the view from the moving automobile, Schwartz puts Bailey's image in "transit through streams of disjunct objects and affects." Each cut to a new scene, a new space, goes unremarked by the ever-walking figure, indifferent to the space around him, and emphasizes the hyperabundant surface's status as merely surface, the figure a screen upon a screen. In a testament to the dis-integration of figure and space, the photo of the man remains black and white, technically, visually, manifestly "other" from the color images of spaces that do not, cannot contain him. He is in the space but not of it and he moves to his own beat.

Schwartz's layering of images gestures toward the collages popular in digital media in the 1990s. In the car we find one kind of photography embedded within another: the "photo as object" moves *and* the "image-in-the-photo" moves *and* the time of the space outside the photo is altered by stop-motion photography. In the next sequence, the complications are compounded again. Against a landscape (moving, photographic, color), we see a photocopied image of a hand. In the palm of the hand is the black and white photograph of Ben Bailey walking. Movies in the palm of your hand. Then, a "real" hand (again seeming almost three-dimensional) enters screen-left, pushing yet another copy of the Bailey photograph(s) across the bottom of the frame. By what criteria could one moving photographic image be more "real" than another? What does the indexicality of the color photo-image matter if the motion is not "realistic"? As with the rotatory shots, many of the illusions of motion in Schwartz are presented as interventions or disruptions of our conception of time as opposed to representations of it—something that could also be said of still photographs.

The last sequence to use the image of Bailey extends his mobile frame into a pyramid on a plane inclined away from the viewer, making the figure's feet huge (accentuated by exaggerated sounds of marching on the soundtrack) and his head small. In addition to "distressing" the photographs so that they look like multiple-generation photocopies, Schwartz's denaturalization of the photo-image by stretching it into space again evokes a phrase by Crary that seems particularly apt. "As windows," the frames and screens of cars and televisions "seemed to open onto a visual pyramid of extensive space in which autonomous movement might

Prospero's Books: The classical and the photographic

be possible."[31] In *Animus,* "extensive space" is nothing but light—it is no place. The promise of autonomy or spontaneous self-determined movement is held in balance between the self-containment of Bailey as a character and the fact that he is stuck in endless repetition, covering space but never being part of that space.

If *Accident* and *Object Conversations* are primarily modernist in their referents and concerns, Peter Greenaway's 1991 film *Prospero's Books* revels in the playground of allusion characteristic of postmodernism. In this film, time and image are digitally altered so that Muybridge's 1880s photographs can be inserted into classical mythology while maintaining their pseudo-scientific photographic indexicality.[32] Greenaway and collaborator Eve Ramboz use Paintbox software to bring books in Prospero's library to life (i.e. to make the illustrations three-dimensional in relation to the page and/or to make them move). In two sequences Muybridge's photographs provide the foundation for Greenaway's dystopic vision of relations between men and women.

Book 18, "The Autobiography of Pasiphae and Semiramis," is bluntly described as pornographic: "the illustrations," the narrator tells us, "leave no ambiguity as to the book's content."[33] Disregarding Muybridge's

Victorian discretion, Greenaway combines naked men and women in the same frame. In one, a woman stands on the left, removing her dress over her head, while two wrestlers struggle and fall on the right. The men and women in Greenaway's constructions never acknowledge each other, their lack of eyeline match readable as emotional distance, a state of non-communication.

Issues of power are negotiated through movement and stasis. In the shot where four images of one woman are set in a semi-circle around a decapitated man who sits/falls to the ground, the stillness of the woman-times-four suggests a cold indifference. In an image where both figures move, the antagonism between men and women is even more explicit. The familiar figure of Ben Bailey returns, throwing a medicine ball at "Shame" (named as such by Muybridge in *The Human Figure in Motion*) who turns as if to flee frame-right. Because she is caught in a stutter step and never actually exits the frame (repeatedly coming *and* going), her interaction with Bailey becomes an awkward ballet of destructive repetition. Covering her face with one arm, shielding her body, the woman adopts a classical pose, enacting the female body as something that shamefully invites violence and condemnation. While women are trained in shame and fear, men are shown as trained in violence. In the last image of Book 18, Bailey throws a punch at another woman. There is a drumbeat on the soundtrack as if his punch has made contact. Because he never actually strikes her, the scene becomes less a matter of physical force than a performance, a *show* of force.[34]

Book 19, "The Ninety-Two Conceits of the Minotaur," presents a series of mythological hybrids including "centaurs, mermaids, harpies, the sphinx, vampires and werewolves . . . [and] the Minotaur, the most celebrated progeny of bestiality."[35] Pieces of different photographs are combined to make a single image. A man walks left to right with the head of a wolf. A woman from *Animal Locomotion* passes by, attached to the body of a horse. A tiger prowls with a human face projected onto its head. An angel made of human legs and birds' wings moves across the screen leaving behind a blurred trail of ghosts as in a Marey photo.

While the figure of the Minotaur provides Greenaway with the opportunity to confuse art, science, mythology, photography and drawing, what do these uses of Muybridge tell us about digital media? In Greenaway, Muybridge's figures blend seamlessly into their surroundings, no longer isolated by their frames. The hybrids of Book 19 inhabit vivid pages containing drawings, graphs, writing, textured paper, blood on the page, etc. Graphic markings enliven the surface/space, partaking of motion just as the human/animal figures do. Because everything is malleable, the distinctions between photograph and drawing are less distinct and the indexical status of the photograph less privileged. In *Prospero's Books* the film's makers are one more step away from thinking about what is "*in* Muybridge" (see Sheldon) and closer to exploring what they can *do with* Muybridge.

The animators I have discussed, as opposed to the documentarians, do not present their conceptions of time or movement as inherent in Muybridge's work. Instead, they foreground their methods of intervention. Computer animation has re-discovered what traditional animation methods always made clear—the discontinuity of time (or the multiplicity of times) possible within a single moving image. When photography is shown to be alterable, it destabilizes the conception of time as singular, made up of "a" moment captured by what Muybridge called the "instantaneous photograph." In digital media, every part of the image, including the photographic, can be altered in every particular. In its infinite mutability, digital time is non-time. Nothing is "captured"; all is created.

Not quite.

Digital artists are often still dependent on an original photograph as a foundation for digital manipulation, using the photographic base to justify, authenticate, and disguise the presence of the digital hand. Digital animation of Muybridge's work is thus caught in a paradox where, as long as it reproduces his images in photographic form, it will be derivative of photography. Yet simultaneously it will fail to achieve the indexicality that sustains photography's status as document. Digital animation cannot truly acknowledge its debt to Muybridge until it recognizes that Muybridge-in-motion, whether on film, flipbook, or computer screen, only exists as animation—as an illusion resulting from creativity and choice.

Amy Lawrence teaches in the department of Film and Television Studies at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *Echo and Narcissus: Women's Voices in Classical Hollywood Film* (California) and *The Films of Peter Greenaway* (Cambridge).

Notes

1. Many of these images were made widely available in *Animals in Motion* (1899) and *The Human Figure in Motion* (1901), selections arranged by Muybridge, and in the Dover editions of the same names published in 1957 and 1955 re-

spectively. According to Haas the Dover volumes "accomplished for Muybridge what no earlier historical or critical writing had yet done: because of the physical availability of the pictures and text . . . the essential facts of his biography and the results of his motion investigations became known internationally," (Robert Bartlett Haas, *Muybridge: Man in Motion* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976], 197-98).

2. See the cover of *The Animation Book (The New Digital Edition)*, Kit Laybourne (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998).
3. Marta Braun, presentation at the "Stop Motion and Fragmentation of Time" conference, Montreal, October 2000.
4. Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 188 (my italics).
5. See Keith Broadfoot and Rex Butler's "The Illusion of Illusion," especially 263-271, in *The Illusion of Life: Essays on Animation,* ed. Alan Cholodenko (Sydney: Power Publications, 1991). Doane cites "the 1960s, the avant-garde film movement known as structural or materialist film" as having "refocused attention on the phenomenon of flicker in its investigation of the ontological implications of the material base of the medium." However, the "content-less" flicker-film "failed to engage with the thematic matrix historically interpenetrating the illusion" (42, 49).
6. Doane, 199.
7. James Sheldon, "Eadweard Muybridge: Motion Studies," pamphlet with laserdisc *Eadweard Muybridge: Motion Studies* (Voyager, 1991), 7.
8. Sheldon, 17.
9. Sheldon, 12.
10. Talcott Williams, "Animal Locomotion: Muybridge's Photographs," *The Century,* July 1887, quoted in Haas, 146.
11. Sheldon, 12.
12. Plate 65. Also see Plate 111 (a man ascending a ladder).
13. Widely used in commercials, the technique, referred to as "bullet-time photography," is best known for its use in *The Matrix* (1999). The number of frames to be chosen from is cited as 12,000 a second in Barbara Maria Stafford, "Revealing Technologies/Magical Domains" in *Devices of Wonder,* eds. Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 98-99.
14. Linda Williams, "Film Body: An Implantation of Perversions," in *Narrative Apparatus Ideology,* ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 509. Also discussed in Williams, *Hard Core: Power Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 37-48. Marta Braun states that the "myth of [Muybridge] projecting photographs (rather than images drawn from photographs) with his zoopraxiscope in 1882, still flourishes," (*Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], 413 n30).
15. This information was presented by John Hiller of the Smithsonian at the "Stop Motion and Fragmentation of Time" conference. Paul Hill in *Eadweard Muybridge 55* (New York: Phaidon, 2001) has also recognized the zoopraxiscope's true affiliation with animation.
16. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 147.
17. T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 270.
18. With a nod to Tom Gunning (Doane, 8).
19. The narration echoes the character in Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* who wants to animate or bring to life a race of tailors' dummies. "Their lives will be short, concise. . . . Sometimes, for one gesture, for one word alone, we shall make the effort to bring them to life."
20. Griffin (Personal Correspondence, April 18, 2002).
21. Broadfoot and Butler discuss the relation between movement, the circle, and time: "In a sense then, quite truly, every movement is both the beginning and end of the circle. . . . Film, qualitative motion in general, is always this thinking of the circular form of time, the circular in time. . . . It is the thinking that for time to pass, for motion to be possible, all moments must be one moment, the circle must be completed" (282, 284-85).
22. Griffin points out that there are twelve images from the Muybridge sequence but he found that that the last and the first were virtually identical (op. cit.).
23. Crary, *Suspensions,* 147.
24. The belief in the superiority of photography's connection to the real allows people to overlook the constructedness of motion just as they overlook the construction of a photographic image, and collapse movement and time into "irreducible continuities" (Doane, 177).
25. Crary, "Eclipse of the Spectacle," in *Art after Modernism,* ed. Brian Wallis (Boston: David R. Godine, 1984), 289.
26. See Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), especially 90-102.
27. Marta Braun has demonstrated that the layouts in *Animal Location* are not reliable, estimating that there are frames out of order or duplicated to fill in gaps in approximately 40% of the plates ("Stop Motion" conference, op. cit.).
28. The film begins with a parody of an academy leader. We see a "clock-face" made up of 12 Baileys walking in place as another Bailey walks around the circle as we count down to the beginning of the film.
29. Doane,176.
30. Crary, "Eclipse of the Spectacle," cites Virilio from "La troisième fenêtre," 289.
31. Crary, "Eclipse of the Spectacle," 289.
32. Greenaway first used digital technology to animate Muybridge in *A TV Dante* (1990) in collaboration with artist Tom Phillips.
33. Greenaway, *Prospero's Books* (NY: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1991), 135.
34. At the very least, the trope of white womanhood threatened by black male brutality in these hyper-physical images reveals how *American* Muybridge's images are.
35. Greenaway, 21.

Abstract Amy Lawrence: "Counterfeit Motion: The Animated Films of Eadweard Muybridge." Since the 1970s, filmmakers have transformed Eadweard Muybridge's "motion study" photographs into moving images. Those who position Muybridge as a "father of cinema" disguise the extent of the work needed to achieve a flawless illusion of motion. Others foreground the creativity involved, challenging both Muybridge-as-icon and cinema-as-we-know-it.

James Tobias

Cinema, Scored

Toward a Comparative Methodology for Music in Media

Here again music gives the most extreme expression to certain characteristics of the artistic, though this too by no means bestows any primacy on music. Music says We directly, regardless of its intentions.

—Theodor W. Adorno[1]

Musicality of Time-Based Media

The editors of *Music in Cinema* point out in their introduction that studies of film music have tended to characterize their object of study as either "a neglected art" or as "unheard melodies."[2] Their comments echo those of Rick Altman, who some years earlier complained that film studies has tended to pay somewhat more attention to music than to other forms of sound, but generally given both music and sound short shrift.[3] What must be added is that in addition to the undervaluing of musical values mirrored between dominant cinema and cinema studies, approaches to music in film have tended to rely on a number of limiting disciplinary assumptions. For musicologists, musical structure may reveal historical and structural aspects of emotion and affect. For cultural historians, music carries ambiguous yet persistent signs of identity and struggle. For film scholars, music either enhances or grounds the meanings of the image track.

Finally, though, the ice has begun to break. Increasingly, a diverse scholarship is producing studies on the importance of music for narrating time-based mediation and audience engagement therewith across cultural forms.[4] New directions for the study of music in time-based media come as scholars *and* practitioners are more aware than ever of the protean reconfigurability allowed by the ongoing introduction of digital resources and technologies to the various sectors of media production, distribution, and reception.

Mike Figgis' 2000 film-on-digital-video *Time Code* neatly thematizes Hollywood under siege by shifting production and reception practices. The semi-improvised narrative of *Time Code* follows a day in the production of an independent film in Los Angeles, and traces the relationships that are developed and destroyed by various characters involved in the production. The film takes the form of four intertwined stories each filling one-quarter of the screen, with a single soundtrack binding the conflicting perspectives of the narrative. This framing of multilinearity invokes that of such interactive forms as videogames, but also that of the power relations of our audiovisual "scanscape":[5] the low-cost video surveillance almost ubiquitously viewed by subjects themselves screened in the security system of the neighborhood convenience store. But the spectatorial "surveillance" of Hollywood film production in *Time Code* is itself framed within a larger framework: that of the synchronization of sound-image relationships. In *Time Code,* the single soundtrack pinpoints the film's emotional highs and lows in a *musique concrete* mixed from the conversation of each narrative as one or the other becomes dominant. While there is little music, the sound mix nonetheless unifies the traditional functions of dialogue and musical score.

The largely unscored film's interest in the musicality of sound-image relations is made ironically explicit in an important concluding scene that depicts Hollywood film production as simultaneously indebted to experiments in form associated with music and new technologies, but resistant to both their introduction and their theorization. A young, female, foreign, avant-garde director— the next big thing perhaps— presents a pitch to cynical film executives and insecure production workers: she plans to update the theories of Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov through the appli-

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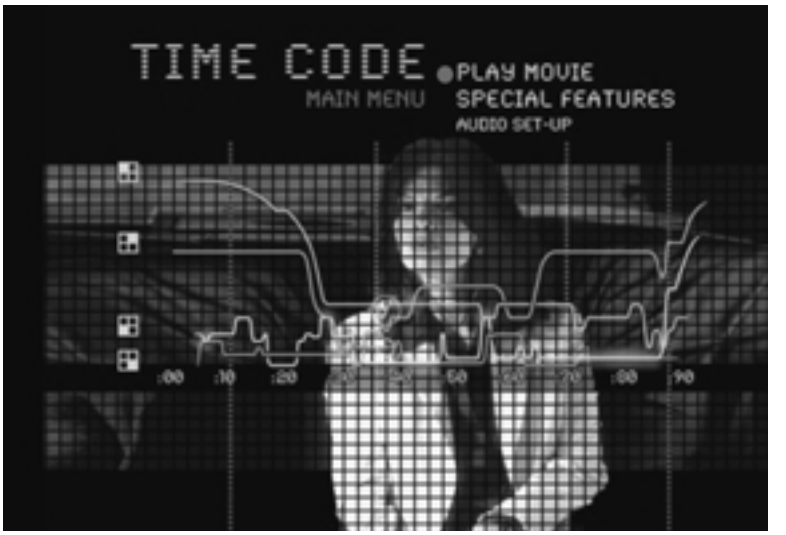


A DVD menu intermingles sound and image

cation of digital technologies. Helping make her point is an electronic musician with a sampling synthesizer; his inane performance, taken together with the young director's ostensible marketability, stresses the ease of use of digital technologies and the perceived risk they pose to entrenched film producers. In the end, the young woman's presumption matters little, and long-lurking sexual violence and devastating earthquakes shake up the film world more than any theoretical or technological challenge to dominant film practice. Yet this ironic conclusion doesn't mitigate *Time Code's* innovation as digital cinema—which has itself learned its lessons from Eisenstein, as we will see below—nor its critical success.

The DVD version of the film further emphasizes the digital reconfiguration of interdependent sound and image.[6] In the disc's scene-selections menu, a line resembling either the output of a seismograph or an auditory frequency plot iconizes the trajectory of the narrative. Dialogue fragments are heard from distinct segments of the film, and faint circles locate each on the line graph. Clicking on the animated concentric circles brings the navigator to that portion of the film, for further "surveillance," and finally, viewing. In keeping with the way the film's visual "monitoring" is subjected to a larger musicality of sound-image synchronization, the film is navigable, then, according to auditory meanings that "secure" vision. These dialogue fragments are also artfully composed as a music of voices scored graphically for the viewer's gestural response. Figgis' interest in music and audition as cinematic properties inform both the cinematic narrative of *Time Code* and its interactive presentation on DVD.

If *Time Code* refers to both avant-garde and industrial monitoring practices to theorize the musicality of both the digitally enhanced cinematic narrative and its interactive synopsis, it does so against dominant notions of film music per se. It contests a recurring problematic in film studies: responding to the state of the art as given by dominant cinema, studies of music in cinema tend to concentrate on music as originating from the composer's score, and find it difficult, if not impossible, to account for musical meaning beyond the auditory form of that composition as it appears in the soundtrack. While strictly speaking not all studies of music in film define their object of study as that acoustic resonance which is stored on the soundtrack along with dialogue and sound effects, and which is monitored in conjunction with a moving image, that is most often because generally studies of music in film fail to rigorously define their object at all. Usually, music defaults to specification as acoustic material having formal qualities proper to the auditory domain, and is still generally considered to supplement a moving image in order to enrich a narrative.

Yet as Figgis' film attests, some classical studies insist on the musicality of film as such, most notably Eisenstein's theories of rhythmic montage or the later "vertical montage." In theorizing the construction of cinematic rhythm, for example, Eisenstein took sound and vision together to constitute a "total image resulting from the double interpenetration of two different dimensions in a single expressive solution." If sound and vision "interpenetrate," not only can montage depict *in terms of* its rhythm, but a graphical "contour" can be shaped between frames throughout a

sequence to correspond with a sound contour. From this theorization of "rhythm" it will be only a short jump for Eisenstein toward a notion of an audiovisual score that in certain ways presages contemporary graphical user interfaces: the much-maligned fragment visualizing the "Battle On Ice" sequence of *Alexander Nevsky* (1938).[7]

But Eisenstein's treatment of audiovisual complementarity achieved as musical form is certainly not alone. For Erwin Panofsky, writing before Eisenstein's "Vertical Montage," cinema performs a radical complementarity of image and sound, most obviously observed in the musical cartoon, but not limited to it:

> Even the silent film, then, was never mute. The visible spectacle always required, and received, an audible accompaniment which, from the very beginning, distinguished the film from simple pantomime and rather classed it—*mutatis mutandis*—with the ballet. . . . To put it briefly, the play—or, as it is very properly called, the "script"—of a moving picture is subject to what might be termed the principle of *coexpressibility*.[8]

Closer to the contemporary moment, theorizing video with attention to the necessity of accounting for its conceptual inscription as much as its technical realization, Fredric Jameson has argued that the "constitutive match or fit between a musical language and a visual one" of the animated cartoon stands as video art's most illuminating precursor.[9] Further, if sound and image have been theorized as mutually necessary in musical correspondence by scholars as recent as Jameson, then theorizations as early as Ernst Bloch's 1919 insistence that the ear "serves as the proxy of the remaining senses; from things it removes alive their crackling, their friction, and from people their speech, and so the film's musical accompaniment, however vague or precise it may finally be, thus comes to be felt as the exact complement in its way to the photography."[10]

These moments in theorizations of film and video, from both within and without the film theoretical canon, constitute a fragmented counter-tradition to the long dominant paradigm of a separable, secondary soundtrack and a cinema formally reducible to the image; if not pointing to any one tradition, strategy, or understanding, they do stress the importance of the technical, perceptual, and affective labors of synchronization undergirding the production of meaning in time-based multimedia work. The work of synchronizing multiple streams or registers of content suggests not so much a return to a constructivist method for digital media but rather an interrogation of spatialized rhythm and the lyrical image.

The interest that these theorizations share in the processes of cinema as a necessarily musical multimedia format suggests a host of implications for our contemporary practices of programming time-based mediation. What is at stake for a critical practice, then, that takes film as a medium which simply *might* include accompanying music, or, alternatively, as one medial configuration amongst many which exhibit musicality?

A musicologically oriented study of music as film sound, analyzing (or quite usefully reconstructing) the formal rhythms and harmonics of the film score, identifying composers and musical styles, or perhaps considering collaborative achievements between composer and director, produced a certain and familiar object by which to ascertain exactly how music (especially Western tonal forms) functions as filmic accompaniment. The film score, in no way descriptive of musical production in even the dominant soundtrack, nonetheless compounds a conceptual orientation for film analysis and a material remnant of the film production process into one overdetermined methodological artifact.

Privileging the compositional text and the credited composer over what are, in reality, more varied processes, the musicological method of film music study faces serious challenges: there are also intertextual sources for musical motifs to be tracked in terms of varied levels of reference which may not necessarily be articulated in terms of formal musical elements. Musicological methodology cannot adequately account for discursive questions of cultural status or audience recognition; explicit or implicit exclusions of musical styles and performers; interplay between music, sound effects, and dialogue; interplay between soundtrack, visual composition, editing, staging, or actors' gestures and choreography; processes of industrial supervision resulting in musical selections determined for reasons having more to do with "demographic correctness," or marketing value, than with compositional effectiveness or historical accuracy; and most crucially for my purposes, a tendency for music to appear as either an informing tendency or an impulse toward technical innovation at various moments in the production, distribution, and reception processes. Music as filmic compositional process, as aesthetic experience, as cul-

tural identity, as tactic of differentiation or of oppositional production, as image: music in these terms has tended to be left untreated, or excluded as somehow exterior to music.

Not only can music represent as sound, by articulating space and dimensionality, timbre and intensity, melody and rhythm, pattern and development, it can represent through image and through temporal synchronization. Music thus also includes motives and motivations, styles, places, generic and medial interplay, cultures of recording and performance, bodily gestures and transformations—the figures of corporeal movement, affect, location, and orientation—in collective and plural form. With these tropes and performativities at the disposal of music in mediation, we can safely stop wondering *whether* music narrates, and begin to wonder *what* it narrates.

With body, culture, and affect at its disposal, music broadly represents audience, and so may narrate positions and movements, with all the implications for affect, cognition, and subjectivity that those terms imply. For music to do this work in the cinema, audiences must have knowledges of it; these knowledges may be informed, cued, or telegraphed through both auditory and visual means. Including knowledge and narrativity as musical possibilities, we needn't limit our analysis of music to auditory form. With this claim and by way of clarifying it, I would like to shift the debate. I aim to understand musicality—not strictly music—across multiple media, not film alone. Musical cultures and discourses can articulate relationships of corporeality, affect, identity, and mobility: actions in a performative framework, any of which may contribute meaning to a work of time-based media. Musicality may drive narrative, but it is also a mode of reception.

Whether we realize it or not, cinema is rich in dominant, experimental, marginal, and oppositional works which contest the interrelated assumptions of music as auditory, as non-representational, non-referential, or non-narrative. Even the least adventurous advertising routinely complicates the notion of music as "merely" auditory, devoted to affect and inferior for purposes of narrativity.[11] Studies of film music have much to relate about time-based media in general—but studies of music in cinema also have much to learn from works in media which are more explicitly multiple and reconfigurable.

The Feeling of Action: Musically Driven Narrative

Audiences' ability to understand, respond to, and perform musicality in audiovisual works may vary with the technical form—film, video game—in which a work is delivered. Further, since music is the one mass medium that travels across all fields of media production, today, in what is often described as the digital convergence of the technological and cultural sectors, music symptomatizes most clearly the controversies of technologically reconfigured reception. But locating the problem in terms of either technicity as such or of specifically digital media is too simple.

First, considerations based on developments specific to the digital domain only emphasize what has always been a broad potential for technical change in both production and consumption habits; it is more important to specify the forms musical actions may take in a mediated environment. Second, while understanding marketing relationships enabled in recent convergent media may be helpful, cross-marketing and production of musical properties and audiences' ability to understand them as multiple media in meaningful correspondence is nothing new, as Marks', Anderson's or Limbacher's studies of music in early cinema make clear.[12] The notion of convergence suggests a simplistic unidirectional dynamic towards "the digital" that is belied by continued variation and variegation at all levels and formats of production and by the distinct receptions given digital technologies across and within different global, regional, or virtual sectors.

Consider the rhythmic gestures and "techno" soundtrack of Tom Tykwer's 1998 hit *Lola Rennt* (*Run Lola Run*), a film which foregrounds musical values as it incorporates conventionally distinct media as narrative tropes proper: staccato photographic *excursa* examine minor characters' destinies in brief; spiraling animated inserts move lead character Lola from domesticity to the world outside through a televisual detour; strategic contrasts between scenes shot on film and on digital video emphasize movement and stasis respectively. Broadly, visual movements of figure and of media form cohere with auditory pattern in a kinesthesis of musical starts and stops constituting the story's iterating segments. The film pretends to be a beat-the-clock game, and borrows the relative closure and repeatability of video games to play its story out.

Run Lola Run follows a young woman who repeats the same day several times: each time she repeats her

actions with a difference, in the hope that this difference will save the life of her boyfriend. Here, musicality across registers drives forward the love-or-death dilemma for Lola, the film's primary agent, in terms of an action theoretic of individual destiny and collective singularity that provides the framework on which narrative reflexivities are hooked. The prominent soundtrack is noticeable in its absence (reduced to underscore or silence) each time Lola is foiled in conversation with her father; and rises, each time, to communicate a seriocomic suspense articulated as a mad dash through Berlin—again, and again, and again. These two modes of filmic narration alternate in their use of distinct cinematic synchronization strategies: dialogue-driven scene with underscore, or musical montage.

But it is not surprising that the film alternates as it navigates from one accident to the next; in this story, making a choice is the whole point. As Lola tells herself as the film "resets" in video game fashion after her first failure to score money for Manni, her drug-dealing boyfriend: "You've got to make a decision." Once Lola decides—on anything—the action begins again, and as the music fades up from the background, the beat-driven soundtrack drives the narrative flow for long sequences at a time. Musical montage corresponds with Lola in action, subject to unforeseeable accidents that she overcomes by returning to the regular rhythmic gestures of running (thus begging the return of scenes marked by underscoring). These action-oriented musical sequences vary with interaction between Lola and supporting characters that turn out to be pivotal in her last successful go-round through the urban obstacle course. Musical accident only makes musical intent all the more important: precisely because things never repeat in quite the same way, Lola's ability to keep the beat matters intensely. This explicitly musical gesturality is aligned with action and urgency against the unknown, the accident, and death; it is motivated, in turn, by underscored sequences which present failed intention, narrative dead-ends, or transgression that ultimately doesn't pay.

A larger narrative rhythm is established through this iterating cycle, which finds Lola time and again forced to "jump over" the impotence that her banker father represents; her action is a narrative syncope of sorts. The final exception makes the rule: finally, Lola's looping, sampled scream obliterates rhythm and melody in its disruption of the casino's smooth processing of money, resounding at impossible length and bringing her the big win that puts her third attempt at saving Manni's life in the bag (although unnecessarily, since Manni at last solves his own problem . . . by running down the poor man who himself "chanced" upon Manni's drug money).

This narrative of chance and intention holds together through musical texturing as rhythmic narrativity, and is confirmed by the introduction— into those segments of the film that are musically integrated in their audiovisual synchronization—of segments which are musically disjunct.[13] Musical meaning is further evidenced in terms of correspondences reverberating across material, perceptual, and discursive levels of the work. Lola's saturated red hair color, especially vibrant as captured on film while she runs, may interpretively correspond with the saturated growl of the Roland 303 emulator arpeggiating in the electronic mix. The muted palette of digital video characterizes Lola's confrontations with the banker father who ignores, fails, or rejects her, where music fades to underscore or to silence.

The film's musicality is not confined strictly to one perceptual modality nor one narrative register, nor to one medial form, nor to any model of closure conventional to a linear narrative. To read the rich ambiguities that this film presents, we might note that it phantasmatically differentiates tropes of intermedial exhibition (photography, animation, film, digital video) guided by music as a signifer of medial being-in-time. The electro-boogie of *Lola*'s soundtrack carries the rhythmic return of the narrative as well as its thematics of open-ended desire against a dead-end situation (the lyric "I wish I . . ." echoes with each of Lola's attempts to beat the clock). Lola's movements appropriate a musicality of rhythm to achieve actions that may relieve the tensions of her relationship with Manni, the long-term of which is unclear (unlike the abbreviated but conclusive photographic mini-narratives) and whose precedent is dismal (the alcoholic mother with whose words Lola turns into cartoon animation and starts to run; the banker father who rejects his patrimony of her). The prominently featured soundtrack, then, combines with the cycles of the image to provide a temporal signifier of Lola's, and thus our, phantasmatic run through desire reproduced in and as mediation; the audience grasps rhythmic movement as an anchor for identification and cohesion when the body of the narrative is torn between media, and neither the past nor the future of desire have much to offer. The film's title, of course, confirms the exceptionality of Lola as bearer of narrative meaning in terms of gender spectacle *and* in terms of medial mobility, exteriority, and action against symbolic dysfunction. As Lola transgresses her mother and father and finds herself frustrated with Manni's impotence, we see her desire

Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Gloria Swanson rehearses in *Music in the Air*

inscribed as rhythmic variation: a desire that plays out in the context of a female insistence on agency in the face of senior figures whose power is undesirable, and of peers whose impotence is unacceptable.

Rhythm, then, mediates desire to forward the drive of a gendered identification even as it differentiates the specificities of competing media in a narrative whose form is beside itself. While the narrative performatively intermediates the cinematic as it mimes iterating video game form, musically it patterns its open-ended repetition as multiple plays sequenced back-to-back, restoring to the "open work" a degree of cinematic closure. So, with some closure returned to a text put in play, *Run Lola Run* also "disintermediates" cinema's narrative affiliations with video games in the name of art-house ambiguity,[14] rejecting the longer-term iterability of its video-game alter: Manni and Lola both do *live*, ambivalently ever after, in the final sequence. In sum, Lola's rhythmic drive carries audience identification through an aleatoric disintermediation of narrative desire projected as competing forms of mediation, significantly, toward a tentative registering of female dissatisfaction.

Reading *Run Lola Run* in terms of its musicality emphasizes the ways rhythmic texturing moves audiences through cultural and gender politics, psychic imaginaries, and transnational reconfigurations of competing media forms. These meanings surface clearly when musical values are not held apart from the narrative values putatively anchored in the image, nor are classified as ideologically "unheard." Music is both background and foreground here, allowing a clarification of the disciplining of music by film studies.

Even with studies of music in film which clarify the narrative function of music in terms of the ideological, affectual, or technical aspects of scoring, the established disciplining of the musical object in terms of "narrative film music" and its other, "the musical," is in effect tautological. If the music makes itself heard, is reflexively evident, or at all insistent on its claims in any way, the performative aspect of this shift in range from "unheard" to "strident" cannot be addressed, since according to the divisions in film music study, it could only happen in a self-conscious genre—the musical—that would be entirely separate from the musical conventions in question. We thus get the problematic distinctions of narrative film music and the film musical, the silent and the heard—a doubling in critical terms of the broader problematic of whether or not to bother accounting for music in film! As *Run Lola Run* demonstrates, narrativity and musicality are not opposed in the first place. *Lola,* though, goes further than simply incorporating distinct conventions of audiovisual synchronization. Here, musicality and narrativity operate together as elements in rhythmic disintermediation: effectively, the articulation of female desire as medial action supersedes both the conventions of the univocal cinematic text *and* the tendencies of the masculine reception of the competing video game form which *Lola* outpaces.

Unheard Histories: Terrains of Musical Reception

Shifts in technologies of mediation and performative knowledges of music point to important critiques that strict emphasis on "the sound of music" as it is scored cannot. The electro-boogie of *Run Lola Run* does have an alteric historical shadow. Intermedial negotiations of distinct cultural forms such as music publishing or cinema belong properly to the histories of mediation sponsoring the counter-tradition of musicality in media invoked earlier. It is precisely these negotiations that are reconfigured by the digital cultures whose aesthetics and potentials inform *Run Lola Run*.

Consider the 1932 musical, *Music in the Air*. A hit on Broadway even with the decline of the operetta, it appeared as a movie version in 1934.[15] Forgettable, and all but forgotten today, this musical solidified Jerome Kern's reputation in Hollywood and led to an award-winning career in musical films.[16] A strange amalgam of all three of the genres Rick Altman describes as constituting the typography of the Hollywood musical (the show, the folk, and the fairy tale musical),[17] this pseudo-Bavarian trifle concludes with a cinematic image of musical mediation. After village musicians inspired by bird-song travel to Munich to peddle an "authentic" slice of popular light opera, they flee urban alienation, but arrive home in time for the surprise radio premiere of their musical handicraft. For a reason that is never explained, the song is broadcast as instrumental, so the young man sings along, with his betrothed, for the village folk—this time with national radio accompaniment instead of the communal brass band. Central loudspeakers mounted in the village square blare out the music as if it were a battle alert, and what started with the birds and made its way to an industrialized national media culture returns to communal origins via broadcast. The on-set strategy of musical playback here dramatizes the integration of a village into the national through the trope of radiophonics. Advanced industrial production reaches the provinces in latent form, if at all; but compensation for the lack is made by appropriating local music production through radio. The technological reproduction of power relationships is naturalized as a novel way to hear "music in the air."

From this musical comes "The Song is You," famously associated with Sinatra, but which became a jazz standard in Charlie Parker's 1952 Los Angeles recording. And with Charlie "Bird" Parker's rendition of a song from a musical that was for the birds, the melody gains a different set of meanings. As a framework for inspiration, improvisation, and creative expression, as a standard against which to display the focused rigor of Black musical artistry, and as an artifact of the industrialized musical culture which bebop musicians took great pains and enjoyment to harmonically deconstruct, the song is rewritten outside of the meanings of theatrical or cinematic musicality within which it had been nationally and internationally inscribed. It takes on a faster tempo, syncopated rhythms, more complex chord changes, melodic innovation. But the melody of "The Song is You" remains recognizable despite Bird's signifying on top of it. In fact, Bird's version of the melody is almost identical to the melody of a short ode to the wireless radio written by Bert Brecht and set to music by Hanns Eisler in 1942.

But let's step back to 1934. The year before *Music in the Air* was released, Hitler gained the Chancellorship in Germany. So exactly how out of date would a folksy operetta set in merry, radiophonic Bavaria have been in 1934? Ernst Bloch writes in 1932:

> The *Fichtelgebirge* [Mountains], the related Black Forest, and related *Spessart* [forest] encapsulate this kind of thing; if these mountains are no longer as gloomy and haunted as they still were in Hauff's times, raftsmen, glassblowers, spirits and robbers would be the nearest scenery surrounding such peasant Gothic even today. Economically and ideologically the peasants, in the midst of the nimble capitalist century, have an older position, however much capitalism has also adapted landed property, a pre-capitalist element, for its own ends, however much it has thoroughly capitalized the peasantry and provided it with its products, however much even the last village is connected by radio to the *juste milieu*.[18]

The birds and the radios of *Music in the Air* telegraph an American view of the Germany which Bloch, Eisler, and many others will flee. Bloch's attempt here is to identify an outside-of-time, a non-contemporaneity that the capitalist totality would not have appropriated absolutely. Certainly, Germany in Bloch's account is a country with pre-capitalist elements and uneven technological development—such unevenness is not so much a lack as a strategic latency of central planning. Yet for American cinema in 1934, Germany is staged as a playback of remote radio listening with a satisfied echo of naïve local re-performance: a touristic representation for the domestic market, and a market to

Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

A performance scene
from *Music in the Air*

capture abroad. Musical culture in this Germany is supposed to emanate not from ages of peasant struggle but from a racially pure countryside that nonetheless provides the capital circuit with "popular" music to be relayed back home. "Music in the air," then, refers to the centralized programming of commercial music so as to function in place of folk music, and to fulfill a phantasmatic desire for connection with, and incorporation into, the sovereign constitution of a national totality. Hollywood's image of this province of music could be, reflexively speaking, America—without all that jazz. (This picture of engineered local derivations of national productions corresponds exactly to the model of the American theatrical and film "light opera.")

By 1942, Eisler is in Hollywood, by way of Czechoslovakia and New York City, working for Fritz Lang on *Hangmen Also Die*. In one scene of Lang's film, appropriated for Eisler's Rockefeller-funded study of film scoring practices, the villain Heydrich, puppet ruler of Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, has been shot by the underground resistance, and is dying in a hospital. Eisler's score for the scene will attempt a response to what he saw as the expressionistic synchronization strategies complicit with the vertically integrated media industries and their attendant hegemonization of audience response; he frames his follow-up to "music in the air" not as program music but as a programmatic intervention in musical mediation:

> The composer's task was to import the true perspective of the scene to the spectator, and to bring out the significant point by brutal means. . . . The music consists of brilliant, strident, almost elegant sequences, in a very high register, suggesting the German colloquial phrase, *auf dem letzten Loch pfeifen* (literally, to blow through the last hole, which corresponds to the English: "to be on one's last legs"). The accompaniment figure is synchronized with the associative motive of the scene: the dripping of the blood is marked by a pizzicato in the strings and a piano figure in a high register. The solution sought here is almost behavioristic. The music makes for adequate reactions on the part of the listeners and precludes the wrong associations.[19]

Eisler's song cycle *Hollywood Songbook* provides a more direct means of responding to the national imaginaries whose global conflagration he had narrowly escaped, and had long opposed. The *Hollywood Songbook* addressed the twelve-tone populist's adjustment to, and alienation from, life in the American capital of mass culture. This collection includes "Ode to a Little Wireless," a song whose melody just happens to resemble that of Bird's rendition of "The Song is You." Brecht's lyrics were set to music by Eisler just six years before he would undergo voluntary deportation to East Germany as a communist:

> Oh little box I carried in my flight
> so as not to break the radio tubes inside me
> from house to boat from boat to train held tight
> so that my enemies could still address me
> right when I slept and much to my dismay
> last thing at night and first thing everyday
> about their victories—defeats for me—
> oh please do not fall silent suddenly.[20]

To the ear, the resemblance between Bird's restructured melody line of Kern's "The Song is You" and Eisler's restrained "Ode" is clear—but any formal determinations of this similarity remain occult at best. Yet as objects of listening knowledge with a larger reception in culture, each melody comprises a response to music in film: film music is, more aptly, music in mediation. Their similarity points to the fact that these responses are determinants in the cultural fabric of which cinema makes use. Whether in subsequent adaptations of or inspirations from Parker's jazz in commercial film, or in Eisler's critically acclaimed film music and still influential theory of cinematic counterpoint, the overlap of these composers' lyrical oppositions points to the musical practices and listening knowledges exterior to cinema, for which film music's claims are not necessarily dominant, but rather positions to be programmed, and played with.

While Parker improvises on the harmonics of the naturalized Hollywood pop standard in bebop style, Eisler turns the serial parametricization of the tone row to the production of highly listenable political statements in song format. For Eisler, the melody of "Ode to a Little Wireless" articulates the wave forms of a technological apparatus that his enemies can use to speak to him—the same radio transmission that provides the climactic integration of love into marriage, nature into technology, communal identity into the German economic totality in *Music in the Air*. And for Eisler, perhaps as for Bird, the catastrophe would be for the enemy's radio to fall silent, that is, to withhold resources to be interpreted, resignified, and reprogrammed. Eisler needs the apparatus to sound, so that he can listen, know, appropriate, and respond. Eisler's urgency is perhaps not unlike that of Bird, for whom a similar melody provides grounds for an easy demonstration of virtuosity and musical identity. In his performance, Bird naturalizes all over again the kinds of musical practices *foreign* to standardized Hollywood programming: improvisation, variation, personalization, mockery. Here is the overlap: political jazz, political pop.

The melodic overlap in the output of Eisler and Parker signals musical practices of programmatic parameterization and of appropriation—different not in kind, but in technical degree— from our contemporary electronic versions of parametrical synthesis and electronic sampling. These practices mark, in turn, the performative limits for audiences of the musical image: programmatic interpretation and improvisatory response have become the terrain of reception for musical knowledges heard and seen in the cultures of mediation. *Lola's* rhythmically entrained gestures and thematics of aleatoric eventuality respond to these limit points in the musical practices of reception to construct an adventure of gendered desire through their invocation. These musical performativities, then, distantly determine the narrative address and construction of the audience in mediation precisely in terms of uneven technological developments, intermedial points of reception, and oppositional aesthetic practices. But of course: otherwise, the sound and vision of musical media cannot be grasped finally *as what we know as our musics*. In music, perhaps, the subject of discourse is first-person plural.

The Cinema, Scored

Conflicts of program and appropriation generate narrative and reception at the heart of the cinema when considered as a musical medium. *Run Lola Run*'s rhythmic drive is only one model of corporeal identification cohering in that generative conflict. Other accounts remain to be described: musicality may be found in audition or in image, as visual lyricism, or performative rhythm; isomorphic movements between visual and sonic domains; film music conformity, complementation, or contest;[21] visual patterns set to music; music video's promotion of pop music; television's jingling enhancement of personal hygiene; narrative's ability to move spectators beyond the cut. Musicality, then, is a function of the production of meaning by synchronizing not sound with image exactly, but rather, medial or narrative form with audience knowledge and practices. As such, it begs an investigation of synchronized materials as instrumental mediation: the ways in which the noise of a representational apparatus is transformed into an instrument.

Attending to musicality in these terms requires a radical decoupling of musical meaning so that aesthetic effect is no longer strictly tied to material form, or mode, of reception. Especially given the potentialities of reconfigurable media, but also given the histories of the cinema, the straightforward conclusion that a spectator "sees" the "image" and "hears" the "music" is no longer tenable. Musical meaning since cinema, at least, crosses auditory and visual registers and today extends explicitly to the gesturality of interactive media; and so, it is not surprising that in films such as *Run Lola Run* musical design turns out to be operative in grounding performative audience gestures toward meaning both in terms of the formal elements of the work but also in terms of the terrain of musical reception. In this sense, the cinematic image is always an

image *scored:* interpreted in a combination of the performativities of seeing with those of listening, whether programmatic or improvised, the visible is *marked* by the simultaneous reception of the audible.

Digital technologies are subject to the scored image in this sense, and their *telos* of scriptable audiovisuality obeys its imperative. Consider, in this light, the 1916 observation of critic Emile Vuillermoz that cinema is able to "orchestrate our images, *score* our visions and memories according to a strictly musical process. . . ."[22] If narrative form and reception knowledges can be related in terms of musical marking, then of particular methodological interest is a turn not to the musicological score, but to the score as interface to the musicality of a work: this broader notion of a graphical score as methodological object and conceptual form may serve as plan, description, pedagogical aim, record of observations, musical iconography, or other indicator of the production, distribution, or reception of meaning—and in turn, may be subject to critique as such. In this expanded sense, contributions to a graphical literature of cinema would range from the "scored imagery" of Vuillermoz to *Time Code*'s digital interface.

Theorists have not hesitated to take up this challenge. By charting in graphical form the relative volumes of music, dialogue, and sound effects in early cinema soundtracks, Altman and several co-authors recently suggest that the construction of the Hollywood soundtrack results from specific negotiations of "social and cultural work as well as technical labor, and thus from conflicting contemporary commitments to differing sound types and uses."[23] Taken as a contribution to the graphical literature of time-based technical media, these authors' mapping of the auditory in relation to the visual suggests three final points.

First, Altman et al.'s graphical notation of auditory elements against shot structure perhaps suggests cinema practices scored as technocultural negotiation of program and appropriation—a cinema marked, or moved, by musicality in the broader sense that I have outlined here. A notion of the graphical score might function more broadly as an interface to the materials of cinema and media studies than Altman and his co-authors envision.[24]

Secondly, as exemplified in Eisenstein's problematic post-hoc analysis of *Nevsky* (and with very different attempts by, for example, Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling, or Oskar Fischinger in the late 1910s to chart the dynamics of musicality in the visual field[25]), the graphical score itself may be seen as a notational tool for that critical counter-tradition which grants simultaneously the musicality and multimediality of the cinema and relates them in terms of synchronization. As such, the graphical score functions as a meta-critical, if formally unreliable, conceptual and aesthetic form within the history of cinema itself. The unreliability of such "media scores" lies in the very difficult goals these documents seek to achieve: the specification of the formal components of the work with their effects in reception. The graphical score is not necessarily transparent or formalizable; but it attains new relevance as a container for the de-coupling of audience reception and medial form in the reconfigurable musical work. We find a specific instance of this relevance in the narrativized interface presented to the navigator of the DVD version of *Time Code*.

Third, the graphical score bears close enough relationship to the interactive interface to conceptually prefigure its appearance. While there is no need to derive directly the time-based graphical scores of multimedia authoring applications such as *After Effects* from the graphical scores of Eisenstein,[26] the graphical score broadly conceived can provide insights into the double problematic of the technical instrumentalization of the cultural work and technically assisted authorship and reception of time-based media—whether cybernetic or cinematic. The formal, conceptual, and functional similarities or disparities between the interface to Figgis' film, the graphical authoring interfaces of production software, and Eisenstein's plot of the breath gesture for *Alexander Nevsky* remain for future work. In brief, each makes an apparent claim to render aesthetic qualities of a larger work in a notational equivalent of that work to effect a claim of correspondence between practices of reception and the effects of the musicalized image.

But the greater potential here is to forward a highly specific reading of the cinema as a medium, as it were, scored: marked by those practices and processes of mediation which enable the positive, if exclusive, structuration of audiences through meanings which may be properly and performatively musical. In interactive media as in cinema or television, narrative form and audience response appear particularly rich when taking account of musical meanings—when musically attending to the feeling of action. Identifying the relations, instrumental and affective, between musical reception and the musical cinema will help us understand why.

James Tobias is Assistant Professor of Digital Media Studies in the Department of English and the Film and Visual Cultures Program at the University of California, Riverside.

Notes

1. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 167.
2. James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer, eds., *Music and Cinema* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000), 1.
3. Rick Altman, *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (Los Angeles: American Film Institute Press, 1992), 171.
4. A number of essays in *Music and Cinema* attend to problematics of narration in music and image, notably Caryl Flinn's essay on music in the New German Cinema and Martin Marks' essay on dramatic functions of music in *Casablanca* and *The Maltese Falcon;* for a number of recent essays addressing the cultural production of the soundtrack in relation to film music, see *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music,* ed. Anthony Knight and Pamela Robertson Wojcik (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).
5. The term comes from Mike Davis' *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 363.
6. Columbia TriStar Home Video (Screen Gems), 2000.
7. Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Selected Works Vol. II* (London: British Film Institute, 1991), 229; see also "Vertical Montage" in the same volume with the accompanying reproduction of the controversial graphical score.
8. Erwin Panofsky , "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," in *Film Theory and Criticism,* 5th Edition, ed. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 283.
9. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 77.
10. Ernst Bloch, *Spirit of Utopia,* trans. Anthony A. Nassar (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 103.
11. Says Los Angeles-based commercial filmmaker Tom Sylvester as to the value of musical design for advertisements, "I always make my commercials so that you could drop the image and put the ad directly on the radio—and the clients never even realize it," (Personal conversation).
12. See Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), or numerous essays in Knight and Wojcik, for studies of marketing film music; the studies of early cinema music which present a historical view of this practice are Martin Marks' *Music and The Silent Film: Contexts and Case Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), Gillian Anderson's *Music for Silent Films* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988), and *Film Music: From Violins to Video,* ed. James Limbacher (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974).
13. For example, when Lola dies with a premature rifle shot from a nervous policeman at the end of the first iteration, we hear an abrupt shift in musical style as a recording of Dinah Washington croons elegantly, "What a difference a day makes . . ." This stylistic shift interrupts the texture established in the synchronization of exterior movement (beat and gesture) on the one hand and interior movement (dialogue and stasis as Lola leaves her mother and father behind) on the other. In the interruption, irony obtains between sound and image, iterated episode and narrative whole.
14. See for example, Bordwell's discussion in "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice," in Mast and Cohen.
15. Billy Wilder was a co-writer; Gloria Swanson played the female lead.
16. For his next film, Kern would win an Academy Award nomination for best song, and subsequently he would be honored several times with the Oscar. Since Kern scored a serial in New York in 1916, in 1934 this film marks a point in Hollywood history where the musical has moved from New York to Hollywood, and the composers and music personnel are following.
17. Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).
18. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 101.
19. Hanns Eisler and Theodor W. Adorno, *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 28.
20. My transcription of Dagmar Krause's 1988 English interpretation.
21. See Nicholas Cook, *Analyzing Musical Multimedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
22. Vuillermoz, in *French Film Theory and Criticism: Volume 1 1907-1939,* ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 131 (emphasis added).
23. Rick Altman, McGraw Jones, and Sonia Tatroe, "Inventing the Cinema Soundtrack: Hollywood's Multiplane Sound System," in Buhler, Flinn, Neumeyer, 341.
24. Altman and his colleagues are traditional in identifying the meaning, effects, and materials of the soundtrack as "auditory," although my suggestion would expand such an "interface" beyond the specific mathematical values they chart; I leave open the problem of notating aesthetic and cultural dynamics, and of temporal representation more broadly. Relevant here is the interest in graphical interfaces for interactive cinema; for projects which have constructed a graphical interface to the cinematic for pedagogical purposes; see, for example, the CD-ROM version of Yuri Tsivian's *Immaterial Bodies,* co-produced with Barry Schneider (Annenberg Center for Communications, January 1, 2001); for projects which propose a graphical interface to narrative and material derived from cinema, see the various productions undertaken by Marsha Kinder et al. in The Labyrinth Project of USC's Annenberg Center for Communication, Nina Menkes' *The Bloody Crazy Female Center; Mysteries and Desire: Searching the Worlds of John Rechy;* and other projects forthcoming.
25. On Eggeling and Richter, see *Hans Richter: Activism, Modernism, and the Avant-Garde,* ed. Stephen C. Foster (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); for Fischinger, see William Moritz, "The Films of Oskar Fischinger," *Film Culture* No. 58, 1974: 59-60.
26. *After Effects* is a software application which allows the composition and synchronization of visual and auditory special effects. It provides the manipulation of effects through parameter "curves" that are conceptually similar to those seen in Eisenstein's *Nevsky* scene.

Abstract James Tobias: "Cinema, Scored: Toward a Comparative Methodology for Music in Media." A counter-tradition of film studies foregrounding the musicality of synchronized media clarifies the musical tendencies of contemporary digital cinemas.

Reviews

Irréversible

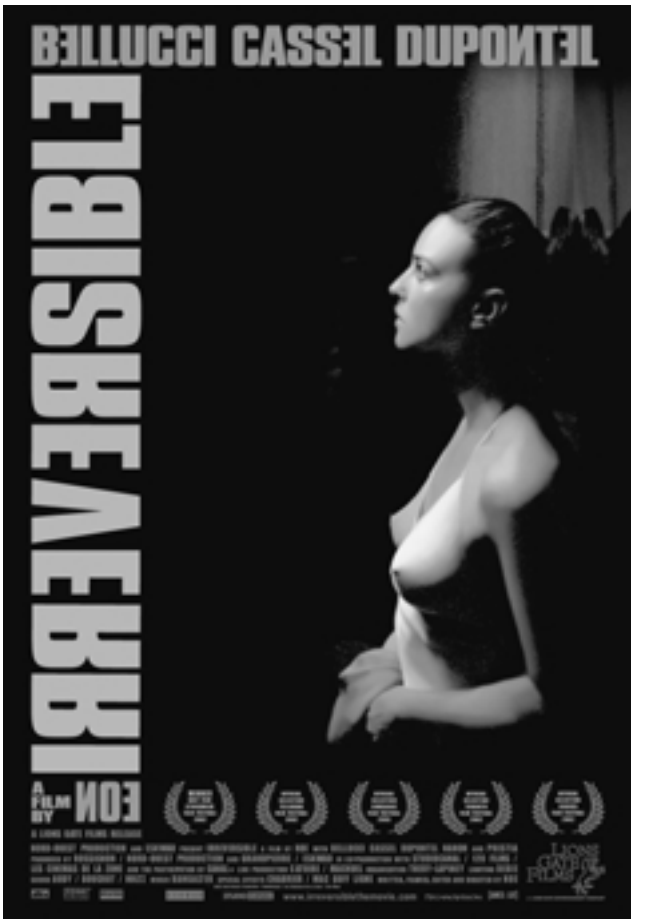
Director: Gaspar Noé. Producer: Christophe Rossignon. Writer: Gaspar Noé. Cinematographers: Benoît Debie, Gaspar Noé. Music: Thomas Bangalter. Studio Canal. US Distribution: Lion's Gate Films.

Watching the shied core
Striking the basket, sliding across the floor
Shows less and less of luck, and more and more
Of failure spreading back up the arm
Earlier and earlier, the unraised hand calm,
The apple unbitten in the palm.

—Philip Larkin, "As Bad as a Mile"

Beginning with a failed gesture—a missed attempt to land an apple core in a trashcan—the poet realizes this was no unlucky shot. He traces his failure back from the gesture, back up the arm itself, earlier and earlier—to when? To the moment the thought was formulated, or earlier? When does a failed action become determined? When do elements of personality become ingrained? When do the choices we make betray a pattern? These are among the philosophical and psychological issues explored by Gaspar Noé in *Irréversible,* which has sparked heated controversy since its 2002 premiere in competition at the Cannes International Film Festival.

Noé was born in Argentina in 1963 but has lived in France since the mid-seventies, when his father fled their native country for political reasons. He studied filmmaking during his late teens, then turned to philosophy, although he recalls being the opposite of a conscientious student. He entered the French film industry as an assistant director of short movies, then made his own directorial debut in 1991 with the forty-minute *Carne,* the brutal story of a misanthropic butcher who takes revenge on the wrong man for molesting his autistic daughter and goes to prison for it. Noé explored these characters further in his 1998 feature *Seul contre tous* (*I Stand Alone*), in which the butcher opens up a new shop in the suburbs with his mistress, then reunites with his daughter and contemplates the prospect of ending their bleak lives in a murder-suicide.



The poster for the American release

Both films caused a critical uproar, but *Irréversible* went a ferocious step farther, reportedly inducing physical illness among film-festival spectators and leading a normally unshockable *Village Voice* reviewer to denounce it for aiming to inflict "nausea, moral indignation, and . . . epilepsy" on its viewers.[1] According to press accounts, the Cannes premiere of *Irréversible* provoked fainting and a walkout by an estimated 250 of the 2400 audience members. People were supposedly nauseated not only by the film's scenes of explicit violence but also by the frenzied, restless camerawork in the long opening shot. Audience members were also apparently upset by the film's frequent use of expletives directed at homosexuals and women, and by a lengthy scene in which the character played by Italian actress Monica Bellucci is anally raped.

Critics in general dismissed the film at Cannes, and many despised it, although it was better received at the Toronto International Film Festival a few months later. A prevailing view was exemplified by

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Johnathan Rosenbaum in the *Chicago Reader,* where he called *Irréversible* "stupid, vicious, and pretentious, though you may find it worth checking out if you want to experiment with your own nervous system."[2] In sum, Noé's work got short shrift from critics too offended by the film to seriously consider its structural complexity.

Irréversible consists of about 13 long, apparently unbroken shots,[3] beginning with a short prologue featuring Philippe Nahon as the violent, dissolute butcher who is the main character in *Carne* and *Seul contre tous*. Half naked and all repugnant, the butcher is rehashing his sordid past with an equally unappealing companion in his squalid Paris apartment. "Time destroys all things," he sighs, as police sirens wail beneath the window. Throughout the scene the camera swirls and dives, providing us with only the most fleeting, temporary moments of clarity.

The camera then plunges into the street below and makes its way into the darkest bowels of an underground homosexual nightclub called The Rectum, where two men seem violently determined to commit murder. These men are Marcus (Vincent Cassel) and Pierre (Albert Dupontel), and they are hunting down a male prostitute known as Le Ténia—The Tapeworm (Jo Prestia)—who, we later learn, has just raped and tortured Alex (Bellucci), the current girlfriend of Marcus and former lover of his pal Pierre. The furious Marcus violently barges into room after room, disrupting scenes of anonymous sex and beating up the participants in a long display of unrelenting violence that momentarily pauses only when one of the aggrieved men breaks his arm. Thinking he's found Le Ténia, the hitherto hesitant Pierre then savagely and methodically smashes in his skull with a heavy fire extinguisher—only, as we discover later, it isn't Le Ténia at all, but a hapless bystander who gets his brains bashed out while Le Ténia himself watches cheerfully from the sidelines. The camera never stops shaking, bobbing, weaving, bouncing off walls, turning upside down, moving in and out of focus—simultaneously showing us nothing and showing us everything. Its movement mirrors the chaos and violence of the situation and the characters' wildly out-of-control states of mind.

Moving back in time—the entire narrative is told in reverse, with each scene depicting events prior to those just shown—we next witness Marcus harassing an Asian taxi-driver and then a transvestite hooker as he searches for The Rectum, while Pierre—a philosophy professor—pleads with him not to be so violent. Moving back in time again, the film shows Alex walking into a dark subway underpass and getting brutally raped and beaten by Le Ténia. In this long scene of violence time seems to stand still, as Alex screams for help and reaches her hand toward the camera in a gesture of desperation and futility. We then see the situation preceding the rape—a party, at which Marcus takes dope and plays around with other girls, causing an irritated Alex to walk home on her own.

Gradually, moving through its reverse chronology, the film explains the reasons and motivations for the scene in The Rectum, as the frenzied camera slowly begins to relax and allow us to make sense of the plot. Eventually a more natural, unobtrusive directorial style comes into play, and we see Marcus and Pierre as calm, pleasant young men. We watch them joking around with Alex as the three of them take the subway to the party, and then we observe a long romantic sequence in which Marcus and Alex lie around in bed together, indulging in love-play and play-fights, laughing and kissing. The film ends with a scene in which Alex, newly pregnant—though she has yet to discover the fact—lies happily reading in a park surrounded by picnicking families and playful children. At this point the camera soars free of its moorings in a different way than earlier, flying into an overhead shot and thence into an exhilarating gyroscopic spin that turns the mise-en-scène into a swirling hallucination of dizzying, delirious intensity. This gives way to a stroboscopic barrage of black-and-white frames assailing the eye with split-second speed, and thence to a printed repetition of the film's grim motto, first articulated by the miserable butcher in the opening sequence: "Time destroys all things." This was the film's original working title, gleaned by Noé from Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* and it recalls a key insight of Schopenhauer as well. "Time is that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands," he wrote in 1851, "and loses all real value."[4]

The numerous critics who readily dismissed *Irréversible* as racist, vacant, and homophobic seem to believe that the film's kinetic camera work, transgressive verbal and physical violence, and reverse chronology are merely tricks and gimmicks, rather than fundamental signifiers of its meaning. *Irréversible* is not, in fact, simply a story told backwards, but a complex study of the nature of time. Its director is less interested in cause and effect than in the form of time itself. (This is part of what distinguishes *Irréversible* from other "reverse chronology" narratives, such as Harold Pinter's 1983 *Betrayal* and Christopher Nolan's 2001 *Memento*.) Nor is *Irréversible* the mere nihilistic

anti-romance that some have found it to be. In fact, Noé describes himself (perhaps a tad disingenuously) as "very sentimental," and *Irréversible* as an "intimate" film. "The structure is all funny and the camerawork is full of energy," he says, "but it's really about losing someone you love."[5]

It's also about a lot more, to be sure. Part of the significance of the film's structure is bodily. We begin in the realm of the anal (The Rectum)—a filthy, dark, destructive place—in search of Le Ténia (the tapeworm), whose violence turns out to be infectious. Alex is anally raped in an underground passageway, and the later conversation sequence in a rumbling subway continues the anal motif. As the film continues, however, we find ourselves progressing—as Freud might say—to a more "mature" realm, that of the vaginal. Alex and Marcus make love, and when Alex tests herself with a home pregnancy kit, she learns she is expecting Marcus' child. The final sequence, the rapid-fire explosion of pure black-and-white frames, may be seen as a vision of the symbolic uterus, evoking the moment of conception and perhaps the beginning of life itself. The film's journey has a Dante-esque quality—starting in the pits of Hell, continuing along the tortuous slopes of Purgatory, and ending with an apparition too blazingly delirious for human perception to take in, much less grasp and comprehend.

Another clue to the film's meaning is the book Alex is seen with more than once in the movie, most notably at the end, when she relaxes in a sunny park surrounded by playing children. The book is J.W. Dunne's treatise *An Experiment with Time,* first published in 1927.[6] Its appearance is not, as one critic complained, merely a glib allusion to the film's non-linear structure. Rather, it sheds a great deal of light on the movie's intricate and innovative composition.

Dunne's theories hinge on the notion that there are multiple kinds of "time states," beginning with the most immediate ones that he calls "Time 1" and "Time 2." Time 1 is the kind of time we're accustomed to in daily life—linear time, moving steadily forward, with states of the external world experienced in succession. Time 2—which coexists with Time 1—is not linear but integrated in a kind of fourth dimension, where future, past, and present merge together. Dunne suggests that we experience most of our lives in Time 1—linear time—but we can access Time 2 in various ways, including through our dreams, when our cognitive faculties don't concentrate so intensely on the present moment. Dunne compares Time 2 to the "Everlasting Now" of Eastern philosophy, and asserts that our dreams always take place in Time 2, where future, present, and past are experienced as superimposed rather than separate and linear, as they appear in Time 1.

According to Dunne, states such as trances, dreams, and hypnosis give potential access to Time 2. Our perceptive faculties try to interpret a dream's events as a succession of views similar to those we experience in Time 1—so what we *experience* as our dream (and recount upon waking) is an attempt to make sense of Time 2 via the perceptual faculties we use to operate in Time 1. Dunne's account of the dreamer's experience closely resembles what the audience of *Irréversible* undergoes, as if Noé is recreating the chronological concatenation of Time 2 as experienced from the perspective of Time 1. In our dreams, as Dunne describes them,

> . . . nothing stays to be looked at. Everything is in a state of flux. . . . And, because of the continual breaking down of your attempts at maintaining a concentrated focus, the dream story develops in a series of disconnected scenes. . . . You are always trying to keep attention moving steadily in the direction to which you are accustomed in your waking observation . . . but attention relaxes, and, when you recontract it, you find, as often as not, that it is focused on the wrong place. . . . You start on a journey, and find yourself abruptly at the end.[7]

An Experiment with Time has been in and out of print sporadically since 1934, and Dunne's contributions to space-time metaphysics have not been embraced by the scientific community. Like that of renegade philosopher Charles Fort, his work has been taken up not by the academy but by dilettantes and dabblers, kitchen mystics and bedroom psychics—and an occasional artist like Noé, whose *Irréversible* enacts a similar kind of experiment. "You want to hypnotize with a movie," Noé says. "The hypnosis either takes you somewhere or it doesn't. You're in a trance or you're not. . . . If the hypnosis works well, the audience will get into your dream."

Looked at from another important perspective, the narrative of Noé's film seems characterized by a belief in human helplessness in the face of a future that is as unchangeable as it is unavoidable, since—as Dunne suggests—it is already present. *Irréversible* abounds in signs and omens of what is to come, although these always have an elusive quality. For example, certain moments in the film's first, more violent scenes are later replayed in an affectionate context,

Albert Dupontel as Pierre, Monica Bellucci as Alex, and Vincent Cassel as Marcus

suggesting some of the many complicated connections between what we call "romantic love" and the brutality of rape and violence. Le Ténia's brutal treatment of Alex, including the way he spits disgustedly into her face after raping her, is echoed by the friendly play-fighting between Marcus and Alex, during which Marcus lightly sputters saliva into Alex's face as a joke.[8] When she first wakes up on the morning of the horrible events, moreover, Alex recalls having a strange nightmare about being trapped inside a red tunnel that then broke around her; although she pays little attention to her dream, it is a clear presentiment of what is to happen that night. Marcus, similarly, is unable to feel his arm when he wakes up—a premonition of his arm being violently broken in the Rectum nightclub. "I want to fuck you in the ass," he tells Alex teasingly a little later, a line clearly anticipating Alex's violent anal rape. The banter that Marcus, Pierre, and Alex engage in on the subway is all about Alex's sexuality, and, in the conversation's emphasis on ways of bringing a sexual partner to orgasm, about instrumental, power-oriented approaches to sexuality in general. In the bleak narrative of *Irréversible,* banter, play-fighting, and real violence are all enmeshed with one another; all are continually present. Only human perception interprets one as distinct from another. A sense of imminent catastrophe, as well as the helplessness of humanity, pervades all the "romantic" scenes involving Marcus, Alex, and Pierre, however casually these are presented.

In some respects, these aspects of *Irréversible* reflect Noé's conception of the film as an exercise in the meanings and mechanisms of memory. "You experience things in a linear way," he explains, "but when you reconstruct them with your mind, they're not linear any more. Your remembrance of your own past is not linear. It's just emotions, and moments, and they're in a chronological disorder. If you want to write a diary of what you did—say, three years ago—it will take you a long time to remember in which order the events took place. You just remember faces, moments, doors, rooms."

On other levels—including its nonlinear ordering of single-take sequences that in themselves are linear—the movie is also an elaborate puzzle that spectators are invited to solve as they watch it. "It's linear, and it's not linear," Noé says. "There was an article in France where the writer said it was [like] a Rubik's Cube; you could take it to pieces and put it together [another] way. . . . It's like a game. I think that after the third scene, people understand the rules of the game, and they want to play with you and try to understand it. You could do something [even] more complex, but that would get people lost."

More profoundly, *Irréversible* is influenced by Dunne's sense of the past and future as states that are constantly with us in the present, and to this extent the movie is philosophically inflected as much by fatalism as by nihilism. Noé's characters are powerless to control any aspect of their future; all are predestined from the outset to a fate from which they cannot escape—a fate that is irreversible.

Violent brutality and romantic affection are closely connected in *Irréversible,* but not in the sense that one causes or leads to the other. The connections simply exist: this hellish state is just the way things are. Humans, through their own efforts, cannot save themselves from their fate, which, in the case of Alex, Marcus, Pierre, and a number of other characters, including Alex's unborn child, is destruction and disaster. Any attempt to save oneself from this disaster is futile, and yet people like Alex and Marcus continue to delude themselves that the future is in their hands. This is a key reason for the reverse chronology of the film, which Noé sees not as a drama but as a tragedy in the fullest sense of the term. "In a drama," he says, "dramatic things happen, and in a tragedy, they *unfold.* In a tragedy you cannot change events. In the way [*Irréversible*] is told, the characters cannot change their future, because you've already seen what's going to happen next. So all you can ask is, 'What happened before?' "

According to scholar Daniel Wojcik, fatalism, nihilism, and powerlessness are the trinity of secular apocalyptic thought.[9] The content and structure of *Irréversible* closely resemble those of the traditional apocalyptic narrative, in which perceived threats, so-

cial turmoil, and anomalous occurrences are interpreted as signs that foretell imminent worldly destruction. The effects of Noé's apocalypse may be limited to a small handful of characters, but its larger implications are inescapable—chief among them, that the social and cultural rituals human beings have developed to perpetuate the concept of "civilization" are meaningless acts of denial and repression. Noé describes *Irréversible* as a poignant drama about "losing someone you love," but the narrative clearly has ramifications far beyond what he idiosyncratically owns up to.

The literal meaning of "apocalypse" is "an unveiling," usually in the sense of an unveiling of a state of affairs that has been present all along. Often, in apocalyptic narratives, what is unveiled is the future, which turns out to have its roots in the present moment. As philosopher and theologian Martin Buber notes, in apocalyptic thought "everything is pre-determined, all human decisions are only sham struggles."[10] This is certainly true of *Irréversible,* which is inflected by a strong mood of secular eschatology, using scenes of apocalyptic violence as metaphors for contemporary *Angst*. In *Irréversible,* rituals and institutions like romantic love, marriage, the family, and friendship are revealed to be no more than vacant shams, and we are left with a resulting sense of anomie, disorientation, lawlessness, and chaos.

In this sense, the narrative of *Irréversible* can be regarded as a synecdoche for twentieth-century thought, which has been characterized by the breakdown of previous meaning systems and subsequent feelings of disillusionment, apathy, and anxiety. In the past century as in previous ages, tragedies, disasters, uncertainty, and threat have led people to attribute causality to external factors, whether God's will, the devil, fate, the government, one's parents, an Axis of Evil, or the configuration of the planets at birth. In *Irréversible,* however, Noé instinctively suggests that in the twenty-first century we can no longer attribute violence and disaster to any cause outside the brutal nature of humanity itself. In his apocalyptic scenario, worldly destruction is considered immanent in human nature rather than externally prescribed, fulfilled by the actions and character of human beings rather than determined by outside forces. This is a chief reason for the film's unbridled eruptions of misogynistic and homophobic hate. Noé isn't merely toying with current cultural taboos. He's unmasking strains of inchoate revulsion and anarchic rage that surge through the allegedly civilized discourses of modernity with no less feral viciousness than they possess in the most lawless and barbaric instances of human existence. All that's different in modernity is the degree of repression and dissimulation with which rage and revulsion are disguised. And in Noé's view such camouflage is the worst enemy of all—concealing truths of human instinct and impulse that are as unshakable as they are grim, and encouraging humanity's woeful urge to disavow its own realities by cowering within hard, hypocritical shells of numbness and denial. It is this existential deadness that *Irréversible* assails, using the most radical resources Noé can muster to distress, disorient, and alarm an audience accustomed to movies as a narcotizing pleasure, not a galvanizing journey into its own most desperately hidden truths.

The branch of apocalyptic thought most clearly evoked by *Irréversible* is "unconditional apocalypticism"[11]: the belief that history is predetermined and unalterable (or, as Dunne would describe it, perpetually present); the world is irredeemable by human effort, and its cataclysmic destruction is therefore inevitable. Some writers and scholars attribute the strand of unconditional apocalypticism in twentieth-century thought to the development of nuclear warheads and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the invention of the bomb, there was a sense that humanity could not reverse its inevitable path to destruction, that scientists had created an uncontrollable weapon that would ultimately destroy the world. "The bomb," according to Alfred Kazin, "gave the shape of life, inner and outer, an irreversible change; a sense of fatefulness would now lie on all things."[12]

What the bomb symbolized to earlier writers and scholars is represented in *Irréversible* by human nature in and of itself. Noé's apocalyptic vision presents us with an infernal, chaotic society cursed by violence, fear, paranoia, and a sense of fatalism that time can only make worse. "For the world is Hell," as Schopenhauer articulated this grim insight a century and a half earlier, "and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it."[13] The veil has been lifted, and what it reveals is death-in-life, and life-in-death.

Mikita Brottman is professor of language and literature at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her books include *Offensive Films, Hollywood Hex,* and the edited collection *Car Crash Culture*. She writes frequently for scholarly, mainstream, and underground publications.

David Sterritt is film critic of *The Christian Science Monitor,* professor of theater and film at Long Island University, and co-chair of the Columbia University Seminar on Cinema and Interdisciplinary Interpretation. His books include *Mad to Be Saved: The Beats, the '50s, and Film* and *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Seeing the Invisible*.

Notes

1. J. Hoberman, "All or Nothing at the Cannes Film Festival," *Village Voice,* June 5-12, 2002. <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0223/hoberman2.php>
2. Quoted in *Metacritic.com,* "What the critics are saying:" <http://www.metacritic.com/film/titles/irreversible/>
3. In fact there are invisible cuts within some of these shots, and some visual details were digitally added in postproduction.
4. Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms,* sel. and trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1970), 51.
5. Interview with Gaspar Noé at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 12, 2002, conducted by David Sterritt and including questions provided by Mikita Brottman. All quotes from Noé are taken from this interview.
6. J.W. Dunne, *An Experiment With Time* (Charlottesville: Hampton Roads Publishing, 2001).
7. Ibid., 104.
8. Interestingly, Vincent Cassell and Monica Bellucci—who were married to each other during production of *Irréversible*—filed for divorce not long after the film's release, in summer 2002.
9. Daniel Wojcik, *The End of the World as We Know It: Faith, Fatalism and Apocalypse in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 201.
10. Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way: Collected Essays,* ed. and trans. Maurice Freedman (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 201.
11. See Wojcik, *End of the World as We Know It,* 209.
12. Alfred Kazin, "Awaiting the crack of doom," *New York Times Book Review,* May 1, 1988: 1.
13. Schopenhauer, 48.

Abstract Mikita Brottman and David Sterritt: *Irréversible*. This essay reviews Gaspar Noé's controversial 2002 film *Irréversible*, considering key philosophical and psychological issues it explores. The authors argue that the film's reverse chronology is not a mere gimmick but is essential to its structural complexity and indicative of apocalyptic implications that make it a provocative study of the nature of time.

Gerry

Director: Gus Van Sant. Producer: Dany Wolf. Writers: Van Sant, Matt Damon, and Casey Affleck. Cinematography: Harris Savides. Music: Arvo Pärt. ThinkFilm.

Two late-adolescent boys, each calling the other Gerry, embark on a nature trail leading into the desert phantasmagoria of Death Valley. They become lost; wander and halt repeatedly, attempting at intervals to rethink their course; light fires, climb rocks, commiserate, dehydrate, hallucinate. One boy finally ends the other's life, and that is pretty much the story. What's it all about, Gerry? We want art to *mean,* and entertainment to *do*. Nothing will tire even a receptive audience faster than a film's failure to do one or the other explicitly, quickly, efficiently. So a film like this is not destined for money—probably not even for appreciable cult status in the next decade, since cults need their sensations too, their freak scenes and midnight masses. Mouths yawn and eyes blink away sleep as *Gerry* plays to a half-filled theater.

But most of those who remain, leave in a state of catatonic quiet and paralytic stillness; and this is simply because *Gerry* is unlike anything else the audience has seen. It has a most unfamiliar effect: while stirring thought, the film discourages, even actively depresses the inclination to speak. Without being at all obvious about it, this is a film that *means,* that *does,* yet it leaves its viewer unable to grasp precisely how or in what way it has done either. Quite apart from its whole quality, *Gerry* is extraordinary merely for being such a dance in air, balancing an explicitness of physical reality with an invisibility of theme.

That is its bifurcation, the physical and the ethereal, the halves of which coalesce to make *Gerry* the unusual, substantial, powerful thing it is. First, the physical. Our director is Gus Van Sant, and though he has framed some marvelous vistas in his day, he has not come to be noted for finding human psychology signaled in the semiotics of physical landscape. *Gerry* goes far beyond any earlier Van Sant in placing its characters in a fantastically suggestive natural world, a bitterly dry, windblown, and seemingly featureless desert which is also an Oz of unexpected shapes, textures, and colors; of surfaces and terrain which, viewed from a certain skeejawed angle, seem magically molded after the human body, or stoically representative of the oblique mental states being delineated by our actors. Little Gerry (Casey Affleck) finds himself stranded atop a forbiddingly high rock, in the shadow of which Big Gerry (Matt Damon) must pace and ponder for many minutes in search of a solution. Over the course of these minutes, the rock comes into focus as more than a vertical slab of immovable granite: it is the isolation of madness (mental illness being one invisible theme); the phallus as fact and obstreperous obstruction (homosexuality being another theme, somewhat more visible); and the dissociation and temporary reunion of two disjunctive personality facets, one grounded, one drifting skyward (for the two Gerrys are, it becomes more and more evident, parts of a single human organism).

We cinephiles may catch intended or inadvertent film references in Van Sant's painterly landscape, and marvel at the range of spectacle and suggestion, of opposite extremes, he has gleaned from desert floor, canyon wall, and sweeping sky. The picture's limitless salt flats evoke Nanook's tundra, while its sand dunes, dwarfing humanity, call up *Lawrence of Arabia*. In a stunning moment, the two Gerrys climb a grassy green hill which cuts in from nowhere, placid and rich, and suddenly we are in John Ford's Ireland—*Quiet Man* country. A whole sub-strain of European film lurks in the plains and promontories: shades of *L'Avventura, Nazarin, The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* all those studies in harsh landscape which found no softness or comfort in undefiled nature. But Van Sant, more than Antonioni, Buñuel, or Pasolini, is interested in landscape for its own sensual sake—its physical reality as well as its thematic relevance. For fully a minute, maybe two, we stare from ground level at great gobbets of white mist pouring like dry-ice fumes over mountaintops: it's a magnificent image, a pure image, and what could explain its duration except that Van Sant also finds it magnificent, too magnificent to look away? The desert skies palpitate with heat, until suddenly they are hanging heavy with clouds which loom ponderously but never break into rain. Whether dark or bright, cloudy or clear, Van Sant's sky is the impending fact of this territory; like Rimbaud's sky, it is stained with mystic horrors. But because he is involved in an intense and imaginative study of physical reality, he cares as much about the stain as any horror it portends or symbolizes.

If the desert is the picture's reality, incipient madness is its unreality, the psychological landscape within whose borders Gerry wanders and which he must finally escape. The threat of madness is here essentially the threat of duality, and it impels Gerry's desire to expunge himself of all ambiguities and com-

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Gerry explores figures in open space

plications—to make a Man of himself, a creature of one dimension, something sealed, solid, and dead. This refines to archetypal essentials the largest theme of Van Sant's career thus far—the desperate wayfaring of handsome boys at the fringes, searching out the terms of manhood—and again, physical reality, that of the actors, is the cue to psychic reality. Casey Affleck's form is willowy, his eyes clouded, always elsewhere; he expounds a long incoherent tale of Roman gods and goddesses with the plainness of an eyewitness report, and does it in a gentle, airy voice, an androgynous child's voice. Matt Damon, in contrast, is large and solid, the big brother and prom date, easy smiler and unsurprising talker, his few words emerging from within a neck well-muscled by varsity sports. Big Gerry is, it seems, the narrative's quiet centering consciousness, its "true" protagonist; while Little Gerry is his alter ego—his creative, imaginative, adventurous drive, androgynous self, imp of the perverse. Most of the talk, decisions, and hallucinations are ceded to Little Gerry: he drives the car, gets the boys lost, strands himself atop the rock, expresses delirious remorse, wears a black shirt with a lone yellow star, grins in a dreamy oblivion at inappropriate moments, and generally exhibits the behavior of a mischievous child with mystic preoccupations.

Van Sant achieves this sense of psychic split not through any conventional techniques of doubling, but by letting suggestions of doubleness emerge from the picture's inventive eyeballing, minimal talk, and punishingly slow rhythms. The two Gerrys exhibit affect and use codified language which, while explicable in the fractured terms of a mind breaking down—spinning rational fantasies from within unfocused delusions—frustrate naturalistic expectation by not pointing to a sane person's meaning. In one of his many long, long takes, Van Sant holds a shallow-focus shot of the two boys in enormous profile as they trudge over rocks and sand, their heads bobbing up and down with the crunching of the pebbles. For a long time the heads bob in perfect pleasing unison. But gradually, the pace of each bob diverges until the two heads are frenetically asynchronous, creating a violent upheaval in the shot's compressed space, for which the rhythmic pebble-crunch now provides an obsessive and brutal soundtrack. It takes patience to endure three or four minutes (an eternity in screen time) of aligned head-bobbing to feel a rich pleasure at what, finally, has been revealed here, and how: the liquid interplay of two personas, psychic process expressed in physical movement as captured by photographic trickery.

Perhaps *Gerry*'s climactic perversity, most grueling punishment, and strangest reward is a long, long, *long* take of the boys dragging their wearied frames with agonized slowness over a flatland crowned by a distant mountain, beneath a sky which, in the shot's minutes-long duration, *somehow* evolves from the weak blue light of afternoon to the heavy dark of late evening, and finally to the brilliance of the deadliest midday sun. Little Gerry, skinny and spectral, is in the foreground, while Big Gerry leads the way to the vanishing point, which is forever vanishing as the shot

The Gerrys lose themselves in Death Valley

grinds on and the death march continues. Through it all, the starving, sun-bleached boys' hands shake in palsy, and each pulls the dead weight of his body forward on one stiff leg, one jerking leg. Finally it dawns on us, like the rising light, that Big Gerry—though it means venturing so near to death that there will be little of him left—is trying, has been trying all this time, to leave Little Gerry behind: to kill him, to shed him and leave his skin in the desert. The long shot's long minutes come to represent years, a whole corridor of development, the passage through one stage of life. Day passes into night, night into day. That is film poetry if anything is.

"Gerry, the path," are the film's first words. And the path leads to the destination, which is identified only as "the thing." We are seeing Big Gerry's version of the American Indian vision quest or aboriginal walkabout, wherein the boy on the verge of manhood submits to the vagaries of wilderness and hallucination so as to shed the skin of immaturity, of frivolity, of whatever his culture and society may define as unbefitting a grown male: that is "the thing." It's valid to say that the white American middle-class culture from which Gerry most likely issues abhors ambiguity in its members above everything. (A recent psychological study claims that the average American feels more comfortable in the company of a drug addict than that of a bisexual—the implication being that the addict is at least a known quantity, whose behavior is therefore to be understood and predicted.) To Gerry's culture, deep and abiding duality of character and desire is a peculiar intellectual conceit, a fruity and ludicrous notion; but because it is intuitively true, the culture is often manic and compulsive in denying it. "We hate this '*Both*' shit," David Foster Wallace writes, apropos of David Lynch and the American audience, for it requires of us "an empathetic confrontation with the exact same muddy *both*-ness in ourselves and our intimates that makes the real world of moral selves so tense and uncomfortable." Finally Little Gerry represents Big Gerry's *both*ness—the boy, the girl, the mystic, the dreamer, the frontier androgyne, the lone star and Ziggy Stardust—every duality, difference, and unquantifiable weirdness Big Gerry's society will not allow him to express and still be considered a man. (It's worth remembering that Matt Damon, who co-wrote the screenplay, was a few years ago surprisingly subtle and skilled at representing the sexually ambiguous, pathologically dual character of Tom Ripley: his post-Opie wholesomeness has its subversive uses, and he seems not unaware of the phenomenon of *both*ness.)

Homosexuality and femininity shadow our hero/es as shades of the ambiguous, the other, the *both*ness of which Gerry must be purged in body and soul. Suppressed gay desire is not too hard to spot between varsity Gerry and his imaginary friend. Early on, the boys run boyishly through the sagebrush, and their overlaid panting has a definite sexual pulse. More than once, Big is seen to bend over and present his ass to Little, a gesture usually accompanied by a comment like "Fuck this" or "Fuck the thing." As smiling Little looks

Matt Damon and Casey Affleck as the two faces of "Gerry"

piquantly down from the phallic rock, Big tenderly and patiently prepares a "bed" of sand for him to land in. And at the climax, Big and Little, supine on the salt flat, langourous and wasted, crawl toward a clinch which in any other context would precede sexual congress, but in this one is the prelude to death. (Add *Duel in the Sun* to the list of iconic screen allusions. And unless I am wrong, this is the only moment of direct physical contact between the two Gerrys.)

The feminine aspect is more elusive. At one point, Big and Little shout communications from rounded peaks that resemble enormous, recumbent breasts; and the odd ravine or crevasse will appear decidedly vaginal in shape. But for the most part the feminine, in a classic American literary tradition, is represented mainly by its absence, or by its secondary incarnation in the male hero's alter ego. There is one exception to this absence—an unmistakable evocation of woman in a womanless world—and it has a connection to the film's ending which gives the narrative whatever thematic closure, whatever "satisfying" circularity it has. Big Gerry, in a stupor of despair, returns the camera's level and fascinated gaze through the folds of a T-shirt wrapped and slung about his face like the head-covering of a Middle-Eastern woman—a protective shroud he wears for the remainder of his sojourn in the desert. It is a fine little experiment in semiotics: the longer we are made to regard Gerry's wrapped head and isolated eyes, the more we impose the reading "female" on what we know perfectly well to be a male face—and the more fluid, therefore, gender itself is made to seem. How fixed is any identity when it is so easily unfixed? The movie has by this stage so thoroughly imagined and penetrated a parallel world of dormant possibilities and destabilized assumptions that this mental drift in the mind of the viewer feels not only natural but unstoppable. The wind blows you that way.

We might think again of those suspended eyes as *Gerry* ends. It ends, as it began, in a car; and again Big Gerry is not in the driver's seat. His face is sunburnt and scarred, and he appears gutted, brutalized. Beside him sits a silent boy of five or so, whose face is turned away; wearing a child's unisexual long hair, the boy dreams and drifts. Behind the wheel is a man viewed only from behind—except for his eyes, which steal rear-view glances at Gerry. There is no mother or sister present, no trace of womanness ever having passed through this car; Gerry has even lost his headdress. Is this Gerry's family unit, or Gerry himself at different ages—the dreaming genderless boy against the hidden face and emotionless control of manhood? Is the rear-view mirror another window on doubleness, through which Gerry sees the man he will become? Has become? Is it triumph or tragedy that Gerry has become a man, when what he sees before him are eyes without a face, existence without identity, eyes trapped in a mirror staring back at the self?

A sacrifice of *both*ness—I believe the picture is saying—is a surrender to nothingness. To the extent that *Gerry*'s theme ever becomes visible, this is the shape it takes: because again, Van Sant cares about

boys defining themselves as men, the losses and the gains inherent in the process. When working inside this theme, he has done a wonderful, singular thing or two, and empathy has freed him to strike intuitive balances between reality and dream, brutality and naiveté, the physical and the ethereal. I am thinking of not just *Gerry* but certain pained, languid passages of *My Own Private Idaho* (whose hero searches vainly for his mother in a world of men) and the flawless whole of *Drugstore Cowboy*.

Gerry delivers its audience into a vast uncertainty, starving and sunburning it into altered consciousness, withholding the water of naturalism and the bread of conventional sense. It is suggestive where *My Own Private Idaho* was merely vague: Van Sant's most direct previous engagement with the theme of boys becoming men—and, to this point at least, his "personal film" par excellence—was florid and grandiose, persistently mistaking its own echo for psychological resonance. But its most puzzling conceit—the sideways-stuffing-in of yellowed pages from *Henry IV Part 1,* Keanu Reeves pouting as Prince Hal and William Richert smirking as a derelict Falstaff—now makes better sense. For Hal's ascension to kingdom was achieved at the cost of Falstaff's fellowship, the sacrifice of his youth, a suicide of the soul, the high and precious price of manhood. Can it ever be otherwise, for any man, in any culture? Very probably not—and there is the tragedy in any great theme, any archetypal narrative. As Big Gerry says to Little Gerry, "Every path goes to the thing."

Van Sant may have found his great theme long ago, but only now has he stripped it to essentials, made it from dust and returned it to dust: *Gerry* has the cumulative force, lurching deliberateness, and unassuming symbolism of myth. It is *My Own Private Death Valley,* and it turns out that the shift of geography, both outer and inner, is all the difference. The narrative's whole logic and movement has been toward a vision of emptiness, not a fulfillment but an erasure, not presence but absence—absence of the androgynous and feminine, eradication and murder of the unmasculine, the unmanly self. Every path goes to the thing. So the audience walks out silent and wearied, responding the only way it can to the film's exactitude of form and irresolution of action. Gerry has lost something enormous, and we watched it go—*but what was it?* The film, on one level a mere formal stunt and film-festival provocation, is a painful success and a sad torture: its overwhelming silence is not the committee-approved silence of God but the harsher speechlessness of identity contemplating its own narrowing into nothingness.

Devin McKinney is a past contributor to *Film Quarterly.* His book *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History* has recently been published by Harvard University Press. He thanks Kathy Berenson for her contributions to this piece.

Abstract Devin McKinney: *Gerry*. Director Gus Van Sant uses expressive landscape, long takes, and oblique, minimal dialogue to fashion a new version of the archetypal passage into manhood. Intensely abstract means are brought to bear on a narrative which crosses cultures and eras, but also has intimate thematic connections to Van Sant's previous work.

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Russian Ark

Director: Alexander Sokurov. Producers: Andrey Deryabin, Jens Meurer, Karsten Stöter. Writers: Anatoly Nikiforov, Alexander Sokurov. Cinematography: Tilman Büttner. Music: Sergey Yevtushenko. Hermitage Bridge Studio. US Distribution: Wellspring.

Anyone who has heard of *Russian Ark* knows that it's a technical tour de force—the first feature-length movie ever to consist of a single, uninterrupted 90-minute shot.[1] But besides that spectacular distinction (to which I'll return later) the film is notable for its other unusual, even peculiar features.

The title refers to the complex of buildings now known as the Hermitage Museum, which originated 300 years ago in Tsar Peter the Great's decision to create a major city on the Baltic (St. Petersburg) and build a Winter Palace there. In the mid-nineteenth century, Catherine the Great began a collection of works of art that her successors expanded, with new buildings added to house them. What is unusual is that the buildings were either designed by Western European architects or inspired by their styles, that the art represented within came from Western Europe and later from Asia and other parts, and that Russian art occupies a separate building. Though the ensemble of halls and passages and stairways seen in Sokurov's film give an idea of the Hermitage as a massive preserver of visual culture, its décor and displays suggest less a Russian than a non-Russian Ark.

That cultural tour, however, is only one aspect of the film. Sokurov takes the viewer on a journey through the Hermitage in both space and time. The spatial journey is continuous, entering the museum from a courtyard, winding its way down through a basement, then up along halls and corridors and briefly through a garden, and eventually up to—but not out of—an open door. The temporal journey takes the viewer smoothly forward and backward though a variety of periods: it begins with eighteenth-century guests arriving for a ball, offers an earlier glimpse of Peter the Great and a later, somewhat longer look at Catherine the Great, and then mingles in turn with present-day visitors, nineteenth-century guests, a present-day blind woman sculptor, a man in a workroom making coffins for World War II victims (presumably during the siege of what was then Leningrad), an older Catherine, Nicholas I with court and military officials at an early nineteenth-century diplomatic ceremony, two actors representing former directors of the museum with the actual current director, early twentieth-century soldiers, the family of Nicholas II and Alexandra, and the last grand ball ever held at the imperial Hermitage, in 1913.

Two characters make this journey. One, whose view is represented by the camera's, is heard but not seen; his voice is Sokurov's, and as the film opens in darkness he conjectures that some accident has happened to him. The other, whom "Sokurov" soon encounters, is an early nineteenth-century French diplomat who finds himself not only unaccountably resuscitated but also speaking fluent Russian. He is visible to everyone, past and present, and he can also see and talk with "Sokurov" (to whom I will refer with quotation marks to distinguish this "character" from the director) while the latter can otherwise be seen and heard only by three friends encountered in a present-day episode.

Since the French diplomat is referred to as "Custine" it seems reasonable to assume that he represents the real-life Marquis Astolphe de Custine, who in 1839 spent five months traveling in Russia and wrote a book about his experiences. Sokurov may, however, be playing a benign joke on us critics who go off to read Custine's fascinating book, since the views and knowledge expressed there bear little resemblance to those of "Custine" in the film. The most egregious difference is that the latter accepts the imperial political system without question and at the end, after taking part in the grand ball, decides to stay in Russia, while the actual Marquis, who expected to admire a system without representative government (his father and grandfather had been guillotined in the Reign of Terror), was instead appalled by it, noting the fear even among the nobility of expressing any kind of political or social criticism. "[W]hoever has really seen Russia will find himself content to live anywhere else."[2]

Because the film is dominated visually by the opulence of the Hermitage's interiors and works of art, together with the finery that adorns its affluent residents and guests, some viewers may feel that Sokurov takes too uncritical or nostalgic view of the tsarist era. But the tsars and their guests are hardly placed on pedestals. The glimpse of Peter shows him beating one of his generals, who crawls away on his belly. Catherine, while watching a rehearsal of a stage show she's producing or directing, announces that she has to rush off to take a piss. Her older self [3] goes for a snowy walk that turns into a comic trot. Nicholas I is in the middle of an elaborate diplomatic ceremony that even Custine finds boring. And the view of the ill-fated family of Nicholas II and Alexandra is brief, distant and unsentimental. As for the spectacular grand ball, if the imperial couple is present they are not singled out for attention, and the

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Sergey Dreiden as The Marquis

guests are overheard uttering such remarks as "Your mother has trained her servants well."

Curiously, the eighteenth-century guests who enter the Hermitage at the beginning of the film include several who reappear at the 1913 ball and also in a smaller group about halfway through the film, in each case too prominently to be explained by a random shuffling of more than 1,000 actors and extras.[4] It's possible that Sokurov is pointing to the static condition of Russian society under the rule of the tsars. Or he may simply be following his assertion that "[t]here is no past or future in history, just as there no past or future in art, only the present."[5]

The film's only reference to the Communist era occurs when "Sokurov" tells Custine that Russia underwent 80 years of revolution: "Very sad." It's not easy to assess Sokurov's political views, but he has said of his early experience as a filmmaker: "The problems the government film institutions had with me—they had no political grounds. Because I had no questions about the political system, I had, let's say, less or no interest. . . . I was always driven by visual aesthetics, aesthetics which connected to the spirituality of man, and set certain morals. . . . On the one hand, the films that I made were forbidden to be shown publicly [under the Soviet system], on the other, my new ideas were always approved."[6] More surprisingly, Sokurov has said that he recognizes only four authorities among filmmakers, and alongside Flaherty and Bergman he names two who flourished under the early Soviet system, Eisenstein and Dovzhenko.[7]

Sokurov is most categorical about the arts in general and film in particular. He says he has been influenced first and foremost by "Russian and European literature of the latter half of the nineteenth century," second by classical music of the same period, and thirdly by painting of the same period. He states, even more categorically, "I am resolutely a realist" and "I am a conservative."[8]

Although such quotations appear serious to the point of severity, Sokurov's filmic practice allows for considerable flexibility. *Mother and Son,* his most recent feature-length narrative before *Russian Ark,* creates and sustains emotional power through its many flattened anastigmatic scenes and its slow pace. *Russian Ark,* by contrast, is scattered with playful incidents: "Sokurov" at the start wondering aloud "Is this staged for me? Do I have a role?"; the noisily mysterious backstage machinery of Catherine's production; the production itself, which resembles a Las Vegas extravaganza; Catherine's dashing off to urinate, which is mirrored later in her older self's breaking into a trot through the snowy garden; the importunate guards who at one point tell Custine that the museum is closing.

Custine's character represents a source and butt of quiet playfulness throughout. When "Sokurov" first encounters Custine, the latter's question, "What language am I speaking?" almost belongs in a Marx Brothers' film, and so does his behavior among present-day visitors, when he starts sniffing and talks of a smell of formaldehyde, as if his body has traveled so far beyond his death date that it needs a little

preservative. Shortly afterward, a man holding an open book (possibly that of the real Marquis?) eyes Custine as the latter is ushered into the next hall by guards, then pokes his head out of the door, glares at Custine and blows at his face, as if at a wraith that should waft away or dissolve; Custine, however, staunchly blows back. Later he approaches a woman admiring a nude painting and they do a brief dance step together. Later still, at the diplomatic ceremony, Custine weaves his way through the ranks of officials and ladies lining one side of the hall, staring inquisitively at their faces; outside, at the buffet table, he examines the Sèvres plates with such delight that the uneasy servers urge him to move on. Finally, at the grand ball, he joins in the dancing with gusto, and when it's over and "Sokurov" says "Let's go," Custine announces that he's staying—and that's the last we see of him, on the brink of war and revolution.

Through all of this "Sokurov" remains the straight man—the quiet observer and restrained commentator. Aside from identifying half a dozen works of art the film is in no sense a guided tour of the Hermitage or a lesson in Russian history, and it's too quirky and oblique to be called a commercial for the museum. Understanding the film's real achievement requires a closer look at its single-shot construction.

The image is in virtually continuous motion, both in its total progress over a distance of 4,265 feet (about four-fifths of a mile) and in its more detailed shifts and circlings (plus pans and tilts). Despite Sokurov's assertion that "the surface of the screen and that of the [painter's] canvas are one and the same,"[9] the dollying camera constantly challenges Sokurov's stated aim of treating the screen as a flat surface rather than a three-dimensional volume. In fact, the apparent three-dimensionality of *Russian Ark* becomes particularly acute when the camera moves in to take a closer look at a painting, whose flatness emphasizes the "depth" around it. And despite the frequent pauses for local camera movements, viewers have the sense of a continuous forward ride through space with its low-key suspense of wondering who or what will appear next.

Of course, viewers will be aware of that apparent contradiction only if they already know about Sokurov's theory and typical practice. But the only prior knowledge necessary to experience another contradiction is that *Russian Ark* consists of a single shot: although the shot must have been completed successfully or the film wouldn't exist, its visible complexity creates some of the suspense of watching a live high-wire act that could still go wrong.

Intended or not, those contradictions make unusual sense in *Russian Ark,* since the Hermitage itself is a place of contradictions. It is a vast building complex that grew by accretion over the centuries; it began as part of a new city founded on an unpromisingly swampy setting; though located on the margins of Europe it amassed an extraordinary collection of European art; and as the longtime home of despots it became a museum open to the public. Other buildings (such as the Palace of Versailles) share some of those contradictions, but not all together and to such an extreme degree. Sokurov could have intensified them by cross-cutting, mixing fairly static shots with close-ups of paintings that at first sight looked "real" (an approach he used for the short film *Hubert Robert: A Fortunate Life,* based on Robert's paintings in the Hermitage). Instead, he chose to flatten time rather than space, favoring continuity over succession.

That may sound like another contradiction, since continual movement emphasizes the flow of time. But the forward movement here is slow, at most a walking pace, and the flow of diegetic time exactly matches that of our viewing time. Although the film moves into and out of different historical periods there is no sense of temporal leaping; everything in the film that refers to the past (including the works of art) takes its place in the steady forward motion of our present.

The ending of the film is its high point in several ways. Most obvious is the sheer virtuosity of the planning and execution of the ballroom scene as the camera weaves its way around and among the dancers and circles even to the back of the orchestra (performing live). But those extreme maneuvers, and especially the crane movement referred to earlier, imply that the camera view is no longer tied completely to "Sokurov." True, the camera returns briefly to him as he bids farewell to Custine, but then it moves on in a final passage that is as astonishing in its own way as the grand ball. The guests are already leaving, and the camera passes between them, gliding down one side of the double staircase they're descending, to reveal the crowd extending forward the entire length of a vast hallway. Beyond the foot of the staircase the camera turns around and moves backward even faster through the crowd that's now facing us and receding continuously. Suddenly the camera veers to the left and stops, revealing a shadowy vestibule and an open door. Outside there's snow on the ground and wisps of it fall in front of darkness. "Sokurov," wherever he may be now, says "The sea is all around; we're destined to sail forever," and the 90 minutes are over.

The Marquis marvels at the Hermitage

The pan to this final image is as startling as a cut, jolting viewers from crowded magnificence to—what? "Sokurov"'s words suggest the imminent deluge of the future-in-the-past: World War I, revolution and more war, Stalinism, World War II.[10] But they also suggest the future-in-the-present, expressing an ambiguous confidence in and trepidation about the survival of human knowledge and creativity: "we" may be sailing forever, but our future achievements remain in question.

In accordance with Alexander Sokurov's emphasis on aesthetics, his single-shot strategy both unites such possible meanings and intensifies the conflict among them, as it does with the contradictions discussed earlier. The sheer precariousness of the project—could it have survived, financially and psychologically, if there had been a major accident during this third take?—reflect the precariousness of history and of life itself. Ultimately, *Russian Ark* represents a provisional triumph over time.

William Johnson is the New York editor for *Film Quarterly*.

Notes

1. The film's running time is listed as 96 minutes, but that includes credits fore and aft and a short section of black leader. The 90 minutes were shot with a high-definition video camera and recorded on a hard disk specially designed to hold 100 minutes. The disk was not reusable. There were two (some sources say three) false starts, and according to Mark Cousins in *Prospect,* July 2002 <http:www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6375-10.cfm>, the two false starts each took five minutes, leaving no further margin of error. Some flubbed or missing lines were dubbed in afterward, and adjustments were made to the visuals, especially for color.
2. *Custine's Eternal Russia: a new edition of "Journey for Our Time,"* trans. and ed. Phyllis Penn Kohler (Monographs in International Affairs: Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1976).
3. Or so I assume: she may be Catherine I, the widow of Peter the Great, who is named in the cast list, though if so she would be the only ruler who appears out of chronological order.
4. Most early reviews refer to 2,000 actors and extras. Sokurov planned to use that number, but because the false starts delayed the final shoot only about half were available.
5. "Plane Songs: Lauren Sedofsky Talks with Alexander Sokurov," *Artforum,* November 2001. <http://run.tepkom.ru/sokurov_main_eng.htm>
6. "The history of the artist's soul is a very sad history," he goes on, in an interview with Paul Schrader, September 3, 1997. <http://run.tepkom.ru/sokurov_main_eng.htm>
7. "Plane Songs."
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. Here Sokurov goes further into his strategies for flattening the image, which include distorted perspective (as in *Stone, Mother and Son*), low contrast (*Whispering Pages*, *Stone*) and mist effects (*Whispering Pages, Oriental Elegy*).
10. In the print shown at the New York Film Festival, the snowy scene outside the door had a blue tinge, hinting at a surrounding sea; but the second print I saw showed only gray.

Abstract William Johnson: *Russian Ark*. Alexander Sokurov's 2002 film was celebrated as a tour de force, a single 90-minute shot of a complex journey through St. Petersburg's Hermitage museum. This review examines that technical achievement but also considers some equally remarkable implications of the film's exploration of art and history, space and time.

Book Reviews

British Horror Cinema

Edited by Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. $27.95 paper.

British Horror Cinema is a volume of essays which aims to explore the diversity of British horror film production. Inspired by recent monographs such as Jonathan Rigby's *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* (2000) and popular accounts of the history of Hammer Films between the late 1950s and early 1970s, the editors redress the popular critical assumption that Hammer defines British horror. The book aims to concentrate on "more neglected areas of Britain's horror film heritage" (1) and to problematize the cohesiveness of "British" horror by examining generic, production, and reception contexts. The book's reader is offered a deeper understanding of how British horror filmmaking is engaged with international examples of horror, as well as how specific films engage with social issues peculiar to Britain.

The first four essays explore the fans, critics and censors of the horror film. Mark Kermode surveys the history of British horror censorship from the 1920s to the Obscene Publications Act of the 1980s designed to curb the "video-nasty" syndrome. He focuses on the protocol of John Trevelyan and Stephen Murphy, chief British censors at the British Board of Film Classification in the 1960s and 1970s respectively. Kermode argues that films with modern or realist settings, like *Eyes without a Face, Peeping Tom* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* disturbed censors more than the Gothic motifs and historical dress of Hammer, and set the trend for a censorship of explicitly visceral horror. Julian Petley's essay genealogizes hostile critical response to the horror film between the 1950s and 1970s by tracing a parallel with the adverse criticism of the Gothic novel in the Romantic period. In the post-war period, Petley argues, both British political parties opposed the revivification of the horror film by Universal Studios. They perceived horror as commercializing film culture, as catering to a desire for sensationalism which undermined the potential for film to be a socio-political medium "improving" the audience.

Ian Conrich's essay "Horrific Films and 1930s British Cinema" points out the irony of so much critical resistance despite, as he claims, horror's origins in a British literary tradition: the Gothic novel. (Though one must remember that Gothic fiction did not enter into the canon of literary studies until the late1960s.) Pinpointing films of the 1930s, Conrich provides informative accounts of the production and direction of several films, such as *The Ghoul* with Boris Karloff (1933) and *Dark Eyes of London* with Bela Lugosi (1939) which were classified as "H"—for "horrific." He argues that, in fact, there was "no British horror cinema of the 1930s." Instead horror was incorporated into other genres like melodrama and comedy.

In another vein, Brigid Cherry's essay "Screaming for Release: Femininity and Horror Film Fandom in Britain," documents the invisibility and marginalization of female horror fans. Based on qualitative data from horror fanzines, magazines, members of fan organizations, questionnaires and personal accounts, she explores the specificities of female fan behaviour, consumption and identification. One conclusion she reaches is that female fans of vampires self-consciously identify with exaggerated sexualized imagery of vampirism to question mainstream ideals of femininity.

Several essays in the book try to subdivide the British horror film into sub-genres such as the occult film, the psycho-thriller, and the plot of female madness, begging the question of what "horror" is to begin with. Some examples also cross over into other sub-genres too easily. Frequently this methodology proves frustrating, as the ambition to detail every film takes over and sacrifices close reading. There are 14 essays in all, each of which is relatively short. For instance in "Necromancy in the UK," Leon Hunt argues that films of witchcraft and the occult should be seen as "a counter-tradition to the dominant Hammer Gothic in its play on the unseen and the unrepresentable" (82). Films like *Night of the Demon* (1957) and *Blood on Satan's Claw* (1970) reflected a growing counter-culture's interest in alternative beliefs, paganism and the occult figure of Aleister Crowley. However, Hunt devotes little attention to *The Wicker Man* (1973), one of the most important films in this respect.

Three essays examine productions which have all been relegated to the crypt of horror film history. Marcelle Perks essay "A Descent into the Underworld" brings back into critical discussion *Death Line* (1972), which was an important influence on Mexican horror director Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos* (1995). Perks analyzes with some sophistication how the visual narrative "subverts generic conventions" by transforming the cannibalistic monsters (who survive on unwary travellers on the London Underground!) into the victims. Peter Hutching's essay on Amicus Productions directs our attention to the degree of American influence in films considered British because of their casting, setting and technical personnel. Managed by two U.S. producers, Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky, several scripts were written by Robert Bloch of *Psycho* fame. Despite the portmanteau form of many Amicus films (which harkens back to Ealing Studios' *Dead of Night* [1945] with several tales contained in a frame narrative) Amicus specializes in the absurdity and surreal cruelty of contemporary life, echoing an American tradition of films such as *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Night of the Living Dead* (1968).

Pete Walker's cult films, *House of Whipcord* (1974), *Frightmare* (1974) and *House of Mortal Sin* (1975) work along a similar revisionist thematic, according to Chibnall in his essay on the director. Contrasting Walker with Hammer director Terence Fisher, Chibnall argues that Walker's films adapt the Gothic themes of generational conflict, monstrosity, scopophilia, camp excess and paranoia found in Hammer films to, as Walker puts it, "create an illusion of naturalness within the fantastic" (167).

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Fans of writer and director Clive Barker are treated to a compilation of interviews and discussions Paul Wells has recorded over a ten-year period with Barker, and an interview with Doug Bradley, the actor who plays "Pinhead" in Barker's *Hellraiser* series. Barker describes how the figures of Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde inspired him to represent monstrosity and the demonic as more ethically complex, challenging the viewer's response to evil.

In general this book will appeal to both the reader who is acquainted superficially with British horror via Hammer films and who wants to discover more, and to those specialists who are already acquainted with these films and are looking to see them discussed within the parameters of film criticism. Containing several illustrations and publicity stills, the book also has a very useful select filmography of British horror films up to and including *The Hole* (2001). In their introduction, Chibnall and Petley argue that British films have followed American formulas, and imply that, currently, the future of successful British horror lies more in films that are not too close to home. Certainly British horror films have made a return to gaining a wider theatrical distribution, with successful films like *28 Days Later* (2002) and *Long Time Dead* (2002). Perhaps the return of the repressed love of the old demons lurks just around the corner?

Max Fincher is completing his Ph.D. on Gothic fiction in the English department at King's College, London, while teaching on the British horror film. He is also finishing a screenplay, "Ambrosio," inspired by a Gothic novel, *The Monk,* by Matthew Lewis.

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Driving Visions

Exploring the Road Movie

By David Laderman. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002. $65.00 cloth. $24.95 paper.

When writing a book on road movies, a writer should know that he won't get too far on puns. After several turns on verbs like "refueled," "rebuilding," and "injected" as well as chapter headings such as "Paving the Way" and "Drifting On Empty," a reader simply runs out of gas and patience. Perhaps an essay might employ *jeux de mots* of this sort more effectively, but with our post-Derridean sensibilities, even shorter works seem too cute after the initial pair of such double entendres. However, if it were only at the stylistic level that David Laderman's book, *Driving Visions: Exploring the Road Movie*, faltered, perhaps it could be more easily overlooked precisely *because* our critical lexicon is so oversaturated with tongue-in-cheek word games. But this is unfortunately not the case. Although at times an interesting study of the evolution of the road film, *Driving Visions* is scarcely thought-provoking. Laderman's book is not a disaster, but a disappointment. His scholarship is sound, and his readings, though often predictable, are rarely wrongheaded. As a historical overview *Driving Visions* is praiseworthy, moving through five decades of road movies and including a chapter of foreign films. Laderman's basic claim is that the road film depicts a culturally ambivalent event: an impulse of rebellion that is continually frustrated and undercut by the very conservatism it seeks to escape. However, taken on its own terms—as a demystification of road-movie ideology—the book has some weaknesses, both structural and theoretical.

The book begins by surveying the sources and features of the road film, finding its origins in the literature of journeying (*The Odyssey, Don Quixote, Tom Jones*). Laderman then asserts that the road film emerged during the modernist movement, after the automobile became a culturally freighted symbol of both freedom and isolation. Laderman claims that:

> The driving force propelling most road movies . . . is an embrace of the journey as a means of cultural critique. Road movies generally aim beyond the borders of cultural familiarity, seeking the unfamiliar for revelation, or at least for the thrill of the unknown. Such traveling, coded as defamiliarization, likewise suggests a mobile refuge from social circumstances felt to be lacking or oppressive in some way. . . . Thus the road movie celebrates subversion as a literal venturing outside the community. (2)

The Bakhtinian echoes can be heard in the passage above. However, unlike Robert Stam (a writer who is also concerned with subversion and community), Laderman does not seem interested in exploring the possibilities of his thesis or the conditions that make such an assertion possible. Instead, Laderman considers a few road film Ur-texts: *Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *Detour* (1945), and *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932), relying on them to establish a conceptual anchor for the book.

The book is a critical biography of the road movie, breaking the genre into two narrative sub-groups—quest road movies (such as *Easy Rider* [1969]) and outlaw road movies (such as *Bonnie and Clyde* [1967])—then surveying them in ten-year blocks. Laderman's arrangement of films by decade is too tidy. He runs through the standard fare of road movies, offering up the 1960s and a sense of rebellion with films like *The Wild One* (1954) and *Easy Rider*. The 1970s are examined through an existential lens with films such as *Five Easy Pieces* (1970) and *Vanishing Point* (1971). The 1980s come with postmodern regalia: *Repo Man* (1983) and *Wild at Heart* (1990). The multiculturalism of the 1990s is addressed with offerings such as Chris Eyre's *Smoke Signals* (1998) and Spike Lee's *Get on the Bus* (1996). And, finally, Laderman gives a rapid-fire account of the European road film, dashing through decades and cultures in films that range from Fellini's *La Strada* (1954) to Von Garnier's *Bandits* (1997). Laderman's desire to compartmentalize films

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within a given decade, rendering radically divergent films reductively similar by periodizing them, often damages the book's integrity. At one point, Laderman suggests a connection between the characters of "Girl" in *Two Lane Black Top* (1971) and "Holly" in *Badlands* (1973) (121). This comparison can only be true on the most superficial level. Laderman would benefit from a consideration of Raymond William's theory on dominant, residual, and emergent elements within any given epoch.

The book is also a formal examination of the genre, performed mainly through a cultural filter. This second task is not so well executed, and this is due largely to the book's inability to engage with its material fully. Often there are too many films to consider, sometimes nine films for a given decade. Other times, too much energy is spent on a specific film which yields little insight into the genre. Monte Hellman's *Two Lane Black Top,* for instance, is given painfully detailed analysis, which seems labored and ultimately unrewarding. In later chapters, when Laderman tries to "spruce up" his analysis with slick-sounding jargon and clever interpretations, the book begins to bend and finally break under its own want of weight. For example, in the fourth chapter, "Blurring the Boundaries," after a three-paragraph gloss of Baudrillard as a poor man's primer to postmodernism, Laderman attempts to explain the effects of postmodernism on the genre. The chapter proper begins with a discussion of George Miller's *The Road Warrior* (1982)—citing it as a postmodern text *par excellence*. Yet many of the examples he proffers as indications of postmodernism are more modernist than postmodern. Then suddenly, midway through his discussion of *The Road Warrior,* Laderman shifts to a consideration of *Repo Man,* a film, by his own admission, that is not quite a road movie but rather a "non- or semi-road movie" (139). The perspicacious reader will see that it is not Miller's film that fails to adequately illustrate the issues at hand but the theorist's failure to completely comprehend them, as if to speak of a western is best done by examining a war film. Often the analysis is unclear and forces the reader to wonder if the author sufficiently understands the constituent features of postmodernism as anything other than cartoonishness and reflexivity. Although tossing around the familiar constellation of binaries (parody/pastiche, pessimism/nihilism, high art/mass culture) Laderman fails to convince us that he understands the stakes of such comparisons. Laderman's idea that postmodernism is merely modernism with a hyper-ludic veneer is too quickly accepted; even the standard consideration of meta-narrative failure, hegemony, and heterology fail to work their way into the analysis of his postmodern texts. For Laderman, the term "postmodern" is primarily a descriptive one and seems synonymous with adjectives like "edgy" "punkish" and "self-conscious." When he discusses *Natural Born Killers* (1994), Laderman alludes to moments within the film as instances of "postmodern packaging of modernist social critique" (195). He writes that in *Natural Born Killers*, "more road movie elements are hurtled over the edge of the genre, extending its boundaries" (200). However, it remains unclear exactly what Laderman means by this, for the boundaries of the genre are not clearly delimited.

There is a center missing from this book, one that would coordinate Laderman's historicism and allow him to push a little further along the lines of something like Will Wright's *Six Guns and Society* or Mary Ann Doane's *The Desire to Desire*. The questions that hover above the text (What are the limits of the road film? How can a particular road film interrogate the genre itself?) are rarely posed. And when they are, they are usually afterthoughts, gestures toward another (as yet unwritten) book. The concept of genre is a fascinating topic and books like Frank Krutnik's *In a Lonely Street* and Stanley Cavell's *Contesting Tears,* or even an essay like Andrew Tudor's "Genre and Critical Methodology," would have the reader call into question the very suppositions that Laderman takes for granted.

In defense of Laderman, his book does not begin by defining itself as a philosophical interrogation of the idea of genre, though surely a good overview should include consideration of convention and deviation. His readings of a number of films are both engaging and well-turned, namely *Bonnie and Clyde, The Vanishing Point,* and *The Straight Story* (1999). The last two are particularly interesting due to Laderman's interpretation of the driver as a politically destabilizing element within the genre. Seeing Alvin Straight, the elderly protagonist of David Lynch's *The Straight Story* who rides a lawnmower instead of a car, as a subversive agent within the road movie tradition is a novel and suggestive interpretation. Despite its problems *Driving Visions* remains a well-organized historical overview of the road film. But finally the reader must wonder "what if?" What if Laderman had pursued the idea of "convention" and "deviation"; of "spectatorship" and "authorship" more keenly? Or what if he had stayed firmly within the boundaries of historical analysis along the lines of Miriam Hansen's *Babel and Babylon*? A reader cannot fault a writer for examining a genre from a such a vantage point as Laderman has, but she can certainly be disappointed when what at times seems an honest treatment of film form turns out instead to be the same old interpretations. For example, when Laderman begins his analysis of Van Sant's *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989), the idea that the key figure of Bob is a driven rather than a driving subject begins to intrigue the reader. Laderman remarks that Bob's passivity is a cipher for his cynical aloofness and sees this "ironic withdrawal" in sharp contrast to other protagonists in the genre. Then, pages later, the reader is offered the usual counter-culture plot analysis: television babies, the fractured nuclear family, William Burroughs as addict guru. The least a book like this should do is to ignite enthusiasm for its subject, to increase the reader's desire to revisit the films analyzed. Laderman's book accomplishes this too few times.

David Cudar teaches film at St. Petersburg College.

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Heat

By Nick James. London: British Film Institute/BFI Modern Classics, 2002. $12.95 paper.

Michael Mann

By Mark Steensland. Herts., England: Pocket Essentials, 2002. $6.95 paper.

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This latter dilemma is more understandable given how much James has to cover in *Heat,* a three-hour film that defies easy categorization. Like other books in the BFI Modern Classics series, this one is exquisitely designed, with relevant full-color images reproduced in their proper aspect ratio. James admits from the start that he has multivalent feelings about the film, stating that its treatment of three central issues—work, destiny, and male identity—"moves me to a stronger degree than anything in most of the art-house films of the 1990s" (7). Then, in the next paragraph, he explores the discomfort that arises from the script's "rhetoric of existential motivation that's sometimes so hectoring it's like being prodded incessantly in the chest" (7-8). Ultimately, James values these various tensions, drawing out the film's highlights and flaws as he works toward a thesis that he articulates most clearly late in the text: "*Heat* [is] a meeting place for a complex set of ideas and responses that grew out of the late 1970s and the early 1980s to dominate the imagery of the 1990s" (76).

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Nonetheless, James's often detached perspective feels dispirited for a film filled with such bombast. By the time he addresses the film's two most famous scenes, the diner conversation between McCauley and Hanna and the climactic bank heist, his attention to plot information and lack of more contemplative reflection becomes frustrating. He spends four pages on the diner scene, over half of which are filled with script lines and photos, and his commentary could be more satisfying than such terse observations as, "They recognize their kinship. It amuses and touches them. There's only time left now for threats and warnings" (64). The six pages James devotes to the heist and subsequent gun battle are more engaging, even though his analysis still feels rushed, and he takes an easy way out in summing up this powerful sequence: "Why such gun battles thrill us so must be left to the professional psychologists" (71). James is similarly scant in his coverage of the final showdown between McCauley and Hanna, reducing the lengthy scene to a single paragraph.

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These informed observations become sporadic and lean as Steensland's accounts of each film proceed. The book could still be valuable as a reference tool since each of Mann's films (save *Ali*) is so thoroughly described, yet the author provides no citations for his numerous specific claims, such as the delay in filming *The Keep* (1983) supposedly caused by the death of a special-effects artist, or Mann's removal of Clannad from the director's cut of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) "because he felt the music was too sentimental and was taking some of the emotional power away from the story" (63). (The book's one-page bibliography is woefully inadequate, especially compared to the research that James offers.) Even though Steensland names the recent *Insider* as his "#1" Mann film, his best writing is found in his study of Mann's earlier films, such as with his points about the Faustian bargain at the heart of *Thief,* and his peculiar enthusiasm for *The Keep,* which most scholars regard as Mann's weakest film.

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Steensland concludes that Mann "only gets better each time he makes another film" (90), having contrasted Mann to more typical directors whose creative early films give way to diminishing returns. Indeed, what makes Mann's work so fascinating is its thematic consistency and its increasing potency, allowing it to maintain prominent and often lauded despite drawing little scholarly attention. These two rudimentary texts, which have their merits, should only be the seeds of a more intense and elaborate assessment of the important work of this eminent auteur.

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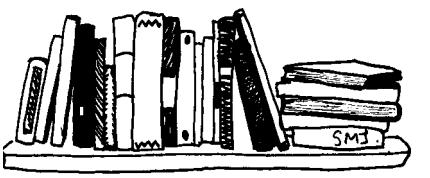

Heat

By Nick James. London: British Film Institute/BFI Modern Classics, 2002. $12.95 paper.

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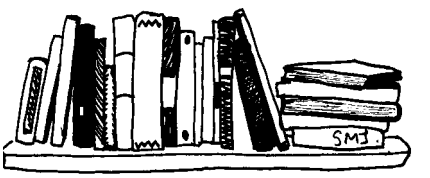

Latino Images in Film

Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance

By Charles Ramírez Berg. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002. $60.00 cloth. $24.95 paper.

In *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance,* Charles Ramírez Berg argues that six different stereotypical images have been used to define Latinos in U.S. cinema since this ethnic group's first appearance in film in the 1920s: the bandido, the harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover, and the dark lady. Though resistance to such demeaning depictions ostensibly arose during three waves of Chicano filmmaking beginning in the late 1960s, Berg identifies—through analysis of costume, language, and even posture and gesture—attempts by Latino actors from as far back as the 1930s to subvert Hollywood expectations of their roles. The author concludes his study on a guarded note, observing that although Latinos are still underrepresented both in front of and behind the camera relative to their numbers in the general population, Latino stars, directors, writers, and producers are increasing, and by self-representation alter the images of themselves that have prevailed for decades. What is at stake for the author is not merely the attainment of employment equity in the film industry, but the re-orientation of a mindset that has contributed to the cultural, psychological, and political subjugation of millions of people: "Movie stereotyping of Latinos . . . has been and continues to be part of an American imperialistic discourse about who should rule the hemisphere—a sort of 'Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny Illustrated' " (4, 5).

Berg divides the book into three parts. In the first part, he systematically defines what he means by "stereotype," examining the history and nuances of the term and building upon the work of Sander Gilman and Homi Bhabha, among others. Though Berg's study is theoretically informed, the style is lucid and free of opaque and abstract jargon. Thus, when the author ingeniously appropriates a theory of family dynamics advanced by psychotherapist Murray Bowen to investigate why members of stereotyped groups frequently overlook degrading images of themselves in film and associate instead with a member of the dominant in-group (usually of different ethnic extraction), Berg does so because the "non-Freudian approach . . . is commonsensical, corresponds to lived experience, and has significant explanatory power" (58). Having defined his terms, including the six stereotypes under which he feels Latinos have been compelled to perform, Berg proceeds to examine how early Latino stars like Lupe Vélez, Gilbert Roland, and José Ferrer, as well as later ones like Raúl Julia and Rosie Pérez, circumvented such restrictions in their performances. Whether or not one agrees with Berg's conclusions, his subtle readings of the way that Roland held his cigarettes or of Ferrer's vocal delivery motivate one to view their films again more attentively.

In the second part of his book, Berg looks at three genres of Hollywood films in which Latinos are presented: social problem films, John Ford westerns, and science-fiction films. The last category contains the author's most interesting analysis. Noting the "real-life external pressure immigrants place on national sovereignty and resources, . . . the internal psychological tension produced by the presence of the aliens," as well as the rapid growth rate of Hispanics that has made them the largest minority group in the United States (163), Berg avails himself of Gilman's developmental psychology work on "the Other" to propose that depictions of science-fiction aliens in the 1980s may have served (though not exclusively) as Hollywood projections of societal fears regarding Hispanics. In *Aliens* (1986), for example, Berg points out that the viewer is confronted with opposing images of motherhood: the restricted brood—one adopted child—of Caucasian Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and the indiscriminate procreation of the dark Alien Queen Mother. Berg also sardonically observes that a U.S. border patrol agent might have difficulty distinguishing between physically similar documented and undocumented Mexican aliens, just as humans might have trouble distinguishing the cyborg Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* (1984), or the replicants in *Blade Runner* (1982), from other humans. Perhaps out of tact, Berg overlooks the irony of Schwarzenegger's limited and highly accented English in the A/alien conflation scheme. Though he otherwise supports his argument well, he could have bolstered his case for dual projection by citing Graham Baker's *Alien Nation* (1988). Here, the connection between Aliens and aliens is unmistakable; the Newcomers live in Los Angeles ghettoes, eat strange and foul-smelling food, run convenience stores or engage in drug trade and prostitution, and are more comfortable expressing themselves in their own language in the presence of human police.

In his third section, Berg examines Mexican-American border documentaries and the films of feature director Robert Rodríguez as examples of Latino self-representation and anti-stereotyping. That the author begins this section with autobiographical scenes from his youth may initially jar the reader, yet Berg's approach is in keeping with arguments he makes about the special and long unrecognized relationship that Mexican Americans have to postmodernism: they "have lived with realities that we now call postmodern—fragmentation, heterogeneity, hybridity, an ironic relation to the past, and a healthy skepticism about the master narratives of progress, liberation, and science—for the past 150 years" (197). He points out how border documentarians embed ambiguous or troublesome social and political realities—living and working on both sides of a highly permeable national border, assimilation without acceptance from either native or adopted cultures—within film narratives themselves. For example, director Lourdes Portillo begins her documentary on *el día de los muertos* (the Day of the Dead), *La Ofrenda* (1989), in Mexico but makes an unmotivated jump cut to San Francisco. Berg argues that "for the unassimilated Mexican American, the move is smooth and natural and makes sense *culturally* because it mimics the back-and-forth cultural shifts that Mexican Americans make dozens of times

daily" (208). The author also devotes several pages to exploring how director Robert Rodríguez subverts tropes from the Mexican *narcotraficante* and international warrior adventure genres in his 1992 film *El Mariachi*. He closes the study with the transcription of an extended interview with Rodríguez, who offers illuminating comments about how he negotiates the border between guerrilla filmmaker and feature film director.

One wishes that the author had turned his perceptive gaze toward Cantinflas' role as the French Passepartout in Michael Anderson's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956), for the Mexican star also surely transcended the stereotype of male buffoon. *My Family/Mi Familia* (1995), mentioned only in passing, likewise treats many of the issues of Mexican-American postmodernist reality that Berg raises. To be fair, however, he does not claim to have written a "comprehensive book about Latinos in film" (9). Though focused on Latino images, the book's system is laid out in such a way that one may profitably apply Berg's methods and insights to films featuring other ethnic groups: Asians, African Americans, Native Americans. The prose is clear and straightforward, the arguments well-formulated and supported, the illustrations appropriate and plentiful. Berg's book should find a place on every budding or professional film theorist's shelf.

Richard John Ascárate received a B.A. in physics from Princeton University. He is currently a graduate student in German at UC Berkeley, where his dissertation research is focused on tropes of Hispanic alterity in early modern German travel narratives and the films of Werner Herzog.

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Masters of Two Arts

Re-creation of European Literatures in Italian Cinema

By Carlo Testa. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. $65.00 cloth. $27.95 paper.

Although the books written about various aspects of Italian cinema are legion, Carlo Testa believes that there is one particular "subset" of films that is consistently neglected by scholars and critics and that thus can be said to be in critical oblivion. In *Masters of Two Arts* he aims to rescue this group of films by making it the object of his exploration. This is the first justification for this book. The films that he is referring to can be subsumed into categories such as: *commedia all'italiana,* neorealism, political cinema, spaghetti westerns, film noir and neo-mythological (i.e. *peplums*). He suggests that their neglect is perhaps a result of belonging to such distinct categories. According to Testa, they have gotten "caught in the crossfire" of these groupings. What they all have in common is that they "re-create" works of European literature.

The second justification for writing this book, Testa states, is the disappointing quality of the few books that have treated the subject of "literature-to-film." He names two: Cristina Bragaglia's *Il piacere del racconto (The Pleasure of Narrating,* 1993), and Giuliana Nuvoli's *Storie ricreate (Recreated Stories,* 1998). Both of these books commit the sin of xenophobia, Testa tells us, dealing only with films inspired by, or related to, works of Italian literature. How, the author asks himself, can anyone limit their horizons in such an egregious manner in this globalized community? Furthermore, in the scholarship that does exist on Italian cinema, the "intellectual affinities" that Testa discerns between Italian directors and European authors have been treated in an "entirely coincidental, unsystematic manner" (4). It is this lamentable void that *Masters of Two Arts* aims to fill, a task that the author deems not only important, but urgent.

In the "Introduction," Testa spends a fair amount of time discussing ideas around the concept of "adaptation/re-creation" as the theoretical foundation of the act of turning literature into film. He has some very specific views on this topic and he means to clarify what they are. Quoting the noted Russian director Eizenshtein (Testa's spelling), the author articulates the contrast between adaptation and re-creation, seeing the former as an "uncreative, debased imitation of pre-existing forms," and the latter as "an original appropriation of them that incorporates features inspired by a changed environment and adequate to it." Clearly Testa is in favor of re-creation.

Testa's theoretical leaning away from textual fidelity, what he calls the "f-word," and toward a synchronically and socially relevant re-creation, is fully in line with our postmodernist ethic that sees the creation of meaning as a cultural construction. That is, meaning is not inherent in the text, it is a product of the time, place and interpreter's experiences.

Testa's approach is to choose examples of texts from French, German and Russian literature that have been re-created as Italian films, represented by authors such as Goethe, Kafka, de Sade, Mérimée, Tolstoy and Pasternak. Among the Italian directors who have worked these re-creations we find Lattuada, Archibugi, Pasolini and Rossellini.

The book is organized into four sections, Part One to Part Four imagined as existing on a continuum describing the relationship between the source text and the film. Part One ("Epigraphic Re-creations") consists of re-creations which have a strong intellectual link to a prior text but it is no more than alluded to in the plot of the film. In Part Two ("Coextensive Re-creations") the prior text is "directly evoked" in the diegetic material but only through isolated "icons." Part Three ("Mediated Re-creations") discusses two films from a group that Testa sees as being sparse. These are "mediated re-creations," in which the relation between the prior text and the film is mediated by "an epiphany, be it from the theater, the opera, or the cinema itself" (18). Finally, Part Four ("Hypertextual Re-creations") discusses films in which directors have attempted to incorporate more

daily" (208). The author also devotes several pages to exploring how director Robert Rodríguez subverts tropes from the Mexican *narcotraficante* and international warrior adventure genres in his 1992 film *El Mariachi*. He closes the study with the transcription of an extended interview with Rodríguez, who offers illuminating comments about how he negotiates the border between guerrilla filmmaker and feature film director.

One wishes that the author had turned his perceptive gaze toward Cantinflas' role as the French Passepartout in Michael Anderson's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956), for the Mexican star also surely transcended the stereotype of male buffoon. *My Family/Mi Familia* (1995), mentioned only in passing, likewise treats many of the issues of Mexican-American postmodernist reality that Berg raises. To be fair, however, he does not claim to have written a "comprehensive book about Latinos in film" (9). Though focused on Latino images, the book's system is laid out in such a way that one may profitably apply Berg's methods and insights to films featuring other ethnic groups: Asians, African Americans, Native Americans. The prose is clear and straightforward, the arguments well-formulated and supported, the illustrations appropriate and plentiful. Berg's book should find a place on every budding or professional film theorist's shelf.

Richard John Ascárate received a B.A. in physics from Princeton University. He is currently a graduate student in German at UC Berkeley, where his dissertation research is focused on tropes of Hispanic alterity in early modern German travel narratives and the films of Werner Herzog.

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Masters of Two Arts

Re-creation of European Literatures in Italian Cinema

By Carlo Testa. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. $65.00 cloth. $27.95 paper.

Although the books written about various aspects of Italian cinema are legion, Carlo Testa believes that there is one particular "subset" of films that is consistently neglected by scholars and critics and that thus can be said to be in critical oblivion. In *Masters of Two Arts* he aims to rescue this group of films by making it the object of his exploration. This is the first justification for this book. The films that he is referring to can be subsumed into categories such as: *commedia all'italiana,* neorealism, political cinema, spaghetti westerns, film noir and neo-mythological (i.e. *peplums*). He suggests that their neglect is perhaps a result of belonging to such distinct categories. According to Testa, they have gotten "caught in the crossfire" of these groupings. What they all have in common is that they "re-create" works of European literature.

The second justification for writing this book, Testa states, is the disappointing quality of the few books that have treated the subject of "literature-to-film." He names two: Cristina Bragaglia's *Il piacere del racconto (The Pleasure of Narrating,* 1993), and Giuliana Nuvoli's *Storie ricreate (Recreated Stories,* 1998). Both of these books commit the sin of xenophobia, Testa tells us, dealing only with films inspired by, or related to, works of Italian literature. How, the author asks himself, can anyone limit their horizons in such an egregious manner in this globalized community? Furthermore, in the scholarship that does exist on Italian cinema, the "intellectual affinities" that Testa discerns between Italian directors and European authors have been treated in an "entirely coincidental, unsystematic manner" (4). It is this lamentable void that *Masters of Two Arts* aims to fill, a task that the author deems not only important, but urgent.

In the "Introduction," Testa spends a fair amount of time discussing ideas around the concept of "adaptation/re-creation" as the theoretical foundation of the act of turning literature into film. He has some very specific views on this topic and he means to clarify what they are. Quoting the noted Russian director Eizenshtein (Testa's spelling), the author articulates the contrast between adaptation and re-creation, seeing the former as an "uncreative, debased imitation of pre-existing forms," and the latter as "an original appropriation of them that incorporates features inspired by a changed environment and adequate to it." Clearly Testa is in favor of re-creation.

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than one text into the cinematic work. For example, Rossellini's *Vanina Vanini* draws not only on Stendhal's same-titled novella, but also upon three or four other texts as well.

It should be fairly obvious from this description of the book's organization that Testa's decision to provide detailed information in the "Introduction" is an excellent idea. The premise of *Masters of Two Arts* would not be easy to grasp otherwise. Indeed, this book is challenging reading, throughout.

Certainly this is an extremely complex book in conception and execution. It is also unlike any other book in the study of literature and film "adaptations." The amount of research it has evidently required is staggering and Testa has clearly not shirked any part of this work. The style is lively and at times even witty and playful. Finally, for those who might require a little help in making the necessary connections in a book as challenging and impressive as this one, Testa provides one hundred pages of Notes as well as a 23-page list of Works Cited.

Grace Russo Bullaro, Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at City University of New York, Lehman College, has published many other book reviews as well as various articles, critical notes, and book chapters in the field of film and literature studies.

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New Hollywood Cinema

An Introduction

By Geoff King. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. $60.00 cloth. $17.50 paper.

In 1970, mainstream American film production embodied the aesthetics and ideology of the traditional A-film, and the contemporary sensibilities of a directors' cinema; *Love Story* on the one hand, *Five Easy Pieces* on the other. By 2000 it had become a realm of conglomerates trading in re-workings of traditional B-movie aesthetics wedded to a subsidiary commitment to films bearing the stamp of an American "independent" sensibility. Geoff King handles the shifts from the "New Hollywood" of the 1960s "auteurs" to the "New Hollywood" of the blockbuster with adroit and searching ease. His book seeks to identify the characteristics of the blockbuster era, its continuities and its discontinuities with the past, using three levels of analysis: an examination of film style, industrial context, and sociopolitical context. The result is a clear and rigorous introduction cannily attuned in exposition and example to the requirements of both undergraduate and graduate study in film.

Does the term "New Hollywood" signify "a complex American 'art' cinema of innovation and experimentation, or the simplistic world of the comic-book blockbuster?" King asks. In the hands of a lesser writer, the range of stylistic features, industrial contexts, and social and cultural resonances interacting here would appear bewildering. The reconciliation of aesthetics and commerce in post-classical American films like *E.T.* and *Gladiator* is central. The American cinema has come a long way in 30 years, and this strenuous weave of film, genre, star and society illustrates how fluidly recent theorizing has come to grips with multi-faceted generational change in Hollywood.

It is interesting to read *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls,* Peter Biskind's 1999 journalistic account of the 1960s New Hollywood alongside this book. As King points out, it is important to examine the exact provenance of films that merely *seem* consonant with contemporary events. We have assumed, for example, that because both appeared around the time of Watergate in 1974, *The Conversation* and *The Parallax View* knowingly caught the mood of that era. Given these films' moods and preoccupations, it has seemed a reasonable assumption for almost 30 years. But do we know that they actually drew on the history of Watergate? Hindsight makes it easy to map films onto eras.

The book repeatedly reiterates the relationship between filmic and historical issues in ways that will be useful to its student readership. But this relationship is far from straightforward. An examination of *From Dusk till Dawn* shows how genres willfully mutate in the corporate era. If *Taxi Driver* saw Travis Bickle follow *The Searchers'* Ethan Edwards into heroic ambiguity, this was due at least in part to the debt New Hollywood auteurs felt they owed classical Hollywood, a realist enterprise that purported to represent actual experience for classical audiences. The unraveling of star images in *From Dusk till Dawn* is gratuitous by contrast, having as much to do with the wholesale generic revision and mutation that is not only practiced but fetishized in postmodernity. The shift from the art cinema of King's "New Hollywood Version I" to the corporate cinema of "New Hollywood Version II," from films by auteurs to films by committees, echoed society's shift towards the ethos of the market embodied in Reaganomics. Seen in this light, generic play becomes less a question of immutable transcendent values embodied in stars, and more one of product differentiation. Everything is up for grabs in the postmodern market place, (as "indie" spirits like Tarantino realize). Yet nostalgia for the heroic ambiguity of the Cold War decades persists in Clint Eastwood, that "quivering bundle of latency" at the heart of *Unforgiven,* a film that continues the mining of the traditional western that began in New Hollywood Version I.

Despite the widespread perception that the blockbuster mentality has meant the end of narrative, possibly of cinema, King argues in favor of the narrative coherence of *Die Hard with a Vengeance* and *Toy Story.* That the blockbuster should be strategically available to multiple reiteration across a range of commercial settings from lunch boxes to video games doesn't mean that it should be "purposely incoherent," as Thomas Schatz has argued. King cites an oft-quoted moment from *Jurassic Park* in which the camera pans across shelves of merchandise at the Jurassic Park gift store. Critics were undecided. Was this a touch of amusing

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self-reference? Or is this the fatal intrusion of market imperatives into the fabric of the film? King prefers to rehabilitate such moments as being integral to the marketing *and* the narrative. Again, the examination of the so-called "Big Dumb Movie" becomes the sensitive and searching excavation of cultural products and the society to which they owe their existence. King points to the wing-like attachments made from pieces of Pepsi cans used to monitor tornadoes in *Twister,* the soft drink plug underwritten by narrative as well as commercial imperatives. Equally, whilst some felt the film's sporting of four-wheel-drive trucks was too blatant an appeal to the suburban dad, privately-sponsored meteorologists probably *have* that kind of cash to play with. Aside from any practical need for Tonka toys like these, King's rationalization of product placement reminded me of the kind of mise-en-scène criticism practiced on auteurs like Minnelli and Ray at the British journal *Movie* in the 1970s. Making a case for continuity between narrative and spectacle in corporate Hollywood, he also suggests historical continuity between the flush fit of apparent accidence and resonance in the contemporary blockbuster and classical mise-en-scene.

Another characteristic of the corporate-era release is its domestic destiny as DVD and video. In a discussion of the technical and historical relations between cinematic and televisual aspect ratios, King looks at *Spartacus* (1960) and *Gladiator* (2000), one adhering to the wide shots and panoramic detail of the widescreen era, the other employing the choppy cuts and strobe-shutter effects associated with contemporary television. The differences between these aesthetics show to what extent Hollywood and television have come into vital congruity with one another since the 1950s when the studios sought their differentiation. Directed by Ridley Scott (a key player in the corporate mainstream, himself descended from TV advertising), and starring Russell Crowe (a star with his own intertext), *Gladiator* is unique for its resurrection of the 1950s Roman epic. The seeming reduction in scale of the spectacle can be felt in the reduction in average shot lengths from *Spartacus* to *Gladiator*. Indeed, *Gladiator*'s fast moving style prompted this viewer to speculate in 2000 how a widescreen master like David Lean might have handled it. Containing its share of computer-generated images, *Gladiator* seemed to solve the problem of reconciling visual scale and narrative drive that dogs the classical epic.

Whatever your opinion of developments in American cinema over the last 30 years, you will be confirmed and challenged by King's aim of showing how these films can be approached and discussed in more than one way. Boasting a thorough bibliography and notes, this is going to be a useful resource for student, tutor, aficionado and historian alike.

Richard Armstrong is a film writer and an Associate Tutor affiliated with the British Film Institute. He is the author of *Billy Wilder, American Film Realist.*

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Selling Hollywood to the World

U.S. and European Struggles for Mastery of the Global Film Industry, 1920-1950

John Trumpbour. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. $75.00 cloth.

The international dominance of mass culture by the United States, and the world's responses to it, have been the subjects of increasing research by scholars of film, media, culture, and business as well as postcolonial and ethnic studies. John Trumpbour's *Selling Hollywood to the World* is a valuable contribution to this body of work with its study of key organizations, individuals, debates, policies, and practices that enabled the U.S. film industry to achieve and maintain global market dominance amid complex and sometimes contradictory forces. One such force is the U.S. government, which generally aided Hollywood in matters such as opening foreign markets but also hindered the industry by sometimes curbing its expansionist tendencies, by antitrust action in the courts, and by xenophobic witch hunts in Congress. Another powerful force with which Hollywood interacted was the Catholic Church, whose restrictions on film content from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s limited filmic expression and yet arguably stimulated creativity, curtailed imports, and broadened the appeal of movies, Hollywood, and the U.S. itself. Various other domestic forces, such as the demands of a diverse audience base, similarly challenged the industry while enhancing its ability to dominate internationally.

After analyzing Hollywood's domestic relations, Trumpbour studies how three countries responded, albeit with little ultimate success, to the threats posed by the U.S. film industry. In England, John Grierson produced artful documentaries that affirmed British culture and everyday life, while Alexander Korda and J. Arthur Rank ambitiously tried to create a "Hollywood-on-the-Thames" by expanding exhibition and the production of sometimes lavish feature films that could be entertaining, sophisticated, and morally uplifting. The French complained about Hollywood's stereotyped depictions of them and its dominance of their exhibition markets, indulged in anti-Semitic rhetoric, pursued a model of small-scale feature film artisanship emphasizing French themes, developed ciné-clubs, and, like the British, enacted policies of state protectionism. In Belgium, which had a tiny film industry and a liberal import policy, a significantly Catholic population aided by the Vatican resisted Hollywood with organized efforts at censorship, public education, and control of distribution and exhibition.

For a global industry that was managed by European Jewish male émigrés, monitored by Catholic moral arbiters, and patronized by Protestant but ultimately multicultural audiences, concerns involving how to appeal to the widest possible demographics often shaped Hollywood's filmmaking and distribution practices. However, despite some efforts at sensitivity, Hollywood films often denigrated people, including dominant whites, as suggested by a Malaysian film-

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goer who observed, "What a mass of homicides, of traitors, bandits, degenerates, unfaithful spouses, of young women without shame on display in your films. And . . . we had believed for such a long time in the superiority of your civilization" (217). The European colonial powers were especially concerned about such reactions potentially undermining their own authority, inasmuch as Hollywood's vulgarity and stereotyping reflected badly upon their white-dominated populations and institutions. Indeed, Hollywood films posed a significant threat not only to global industrial and cultural production, but also to the very existence of the colonial system. While colonialism's demise obviously was not due simply to cinema, Hollywood was a factor, as were the two world wars that enabled the industry to expand its global reach, often with direct support from the U.S. State and Commerce Departments. Indeed, it was during and largely because of World War I that Hollywood first achieved global market dominance, although Trumpbour notes that the U.S. film industry had made some strong overseas gains prior to the war.

This book is a significant contribution to the study of Hollywood's global power and complex interrelationships with other national cinemas, partly because of its rich and voluminous original research, with fifty pages of endnotes documenting a range of sources that Trumpbour often quotes verbatim and at length. These quotes give voice to those involved in debates over film policy and practice, although they sometimes distract from the author's own voice. Another strength of this work is its multivariate quality of identifying and discussing the many factors and positions within debates that shaped each national cinema, including forces inside countries that could be as vexing as those originating from outside. With a generally balanced and nuanced critical approach, Trumpbour neither bashes the U.S. film industry as simply an imperialist monolith nor merely blames its competitors solely for their predicaments.

Belgium may be interesting as a country that "sought to coordinate a global Catholic resistance to the film industry and illustrates the travail of small nations in securing cultural production," but if Catholic resistance merits a whole chapter beyond Trumpbour's coverage of it in the U.S. and France, then a more logical country to examine seemingly would be Italy, which probably had comparable concerns among its public and the Church, and which also had a major national cinema that at times competed with and influenced Hollywood (12). Indeed, several other countries seem generally more compelling as potential case studies than Belgium, including Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan. And if small film industries that have received little scholarly attention are a priority, then why not focus on a country outside Europe altogether, particularly for a book that is about "selling Hollywood to the world?" How, for example, did the world's most populous nation, China, respond to the Hollywood onslaught? Trumpbour fortunately gives some voice to various countries and peoples, but a more sustained examination of a particular non-European cinema would make for a stronger work.

While this book is valuable for its emphasis on national cinemas in relation to each other and their constituencies, it also would benefit from some discussion of the overt "selling" that these cinemas did in relation to their publics, namely the use of advertising and publicity to promote industries, films, and actors. Regarding the star system, for instance, Trumpbour mentions only in passing that Hollywood developed "audiences and product loyalty by glorification of individual stars and heroic personalities," and thus leaves open many important questions about how this development occurred (135). Advertising and publicity are at least as publicly visible, culturally pernicious, and complicit in spreading American values and aesthetics as movies, and certainly are vital to Hollywood as motivational mediators between films and those who produce, exhibit, and consume them. Trumpbour is not alone in his oversight; scholars generally have paid little attention to film promotion as an object of serious study.

This book is a rich resource for anyone interested in what has been at stake in the interplay between Hollywood and its rival cinemas, namely the wealth, power, and prestige of particular film industries, cultures, and nations. Certain oversights notwithstanding, this is a well-researched work that enriches our understanding of a complex relationship that continues to impact communities around the world.

James Latham has recently completed a Ph.D. in Cinema Studies at New York University, with a dissertation on the promotion of early Hollywood and its relations to racial, ethnic, and national identity.

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Book Notes

Contributors to Book Notes: **Linda Kauffman** is Professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park, and author of numerous articles on film, including chapters in her most recent book, *Bad Girls and Sick Boys: Fantasies in Contemporary Art and Culture*. **Gerardo Cummings**, ABD from Wayne State University and current Visiting Instructor at Cleveland State University, has published book reviews, cultural and music articles, and is working on a collection of Spanish poems, *Garabatos sin son, ni ton, ni razón, ni corazón*. **Wheeler Winston Dixon** is the James Ryan Endowed Professor of Film Studies and Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Beard, William. *The Artist as Monster: The Cinema of David Cronenberg*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. $50.00 cloth. David Cronenberg is one of the few living filmmakers whose brilliance as a writer and director have earned him the title of auteur. Yet he has constantly been misunderstood. His commercial successes—such as *Scanners* (1980) and *The Fly* (1986)—have been overshadowed by commercial failures such as *M. Butterfly* (1993). Critics

viewed his early films as sensationalistic and pornographic, and dismissed him as "the King of venereal horror." Yet from the outset, he approached the horror genre as a medium for philosophical investigation, following the same tradition that links Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, Bataille, Céline, and Kristeva. Being and Nothingness are the focal points of Cronenberg's investigative gaze: What are the origins of creativity and subjectivity? This is the question that William Beard's ambitious study addresses. The artist must be a "monster" to look unflinchingly at physical and mental deterioration and death. He must explore the vicissitudes of psychic life, and be willing to plumb the abject depths of civilization's discontents. Through transgression and taboo, the artist positions himself beyond rigid social norms and expectations. Whether it is sexual obsession, pathological diseases, emotional vampirism, or scientific delusions of power and control, nothing human is alien to him.

Beard provides a comprehensive overview of the filmmaker's evolution as an artist, from *Stereo* (1969) to *Crash* (1996), demonstrating that Cronenberg had a coherent vision from the start: his abiding themes involve not only the mind/body split, but the irremediable schisms between order and chaos, science and art, male and female, technology and nature. Beard provides a detailed analysis of Cronenberg's evolving cinematic technique, which is as audacious as it is original. Whether he is discussing the exploding heads in *Scanners,* the special effects in *Naked Lunch,* or the cool cinematography of *Crash,* Beard's meticulous attention to the distinctive Cronenbergian craft of filmmaking is superb.

Equally notable is his analysis of Cronenberg's unfolding exploration of the construction of masculinity. Rather than condemning Cronenberg's heroes as sadistic and misogynistic, as critics such as Robin Wood have done, Beard argues that Cronenberg portrays masculinity as an impossible burden that leads almost inevitably to destruction. The Cronenbergian hero is feckless and affectless; he is emotionally isolated, weak, alienated, stripped of will and purpose in the denatured technological landscape, and torn between conflicting desires for self-sufficiency and an unquenchable yearning for connection to others. Beard's approach is both clever and illuminating: he views *The Fly* as a portrait of hypermasculinity, consisting—once Seth's metamorphosis is complete—of insatiable appetites for food and sex, and he sensitively traces the remarkably subtle nuances in *M. Butterfly* by approaching it as a deconstruction of male desire.

While Beard is influenced by postmodern critical and film theory, he avoids the reductiveness that sometimes mars some theorists' work. Although he often disagrees with Steven Shaviro and Barbara Creed, he acknowledges his debt. Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* has the strongest philosophical resonance with Cronenberg's vision, particularly in *Dead Ringers,* one of Beard's best examples of the tortured trials of masculinity. Beard argues persuasively that from the outset, Cronenberg self-consciously pursued the status of artist, and he illustrates how many of Cronenberg's films offer a meta-commentary about the nature of artistic creation. His entire oeuvre consists of different kinds of portraits of the artist as visionary, transgressor, and experimenter. With Chris Rodley's *Cronenberg on Cronenberg* (1992), Serge Grunberg's *David Cronenberg* (1992) and recent book of interviews with Cronenberg (both in French), Beard's exhaustive study will become an indispensable resource for fans and scholars alike.

—Linda Kauffman

Bikandi-Mejias, Aitor. *El carnaval de Luis Buñuel: Estudios sobre una tradición cultural.* Madrid: Ediciones Del Laberinto, 2000. 11.00 Euros paper. Luis Buñuel, Spain's premier surrealist director, died on July 29th, 1983, but his unfortunate passing away seems to not have affected the interest his cinematographic work has continued to cultivate over the years. The number of articles and publications that have appeared since the day in which he answered his wife's query on how he was feeling with "I am dying," has only increased. One of the most recent entries into the Buñuel canon is Aitor Bikandi-Mejias' *El carnaval de Luis Buñuel: Estudios sobre una tradición cultural.* The research in this text takes the reader on a journey through critical territory still partially undiscovered by previous studies dedicated to the director's work. The book consists of an introduction, ten chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Chapter one, "Hay cuerpos y cuerpos" ("There are Bodies and Bodies"—this and all forthcoming translations of the chapter titles and quotations are mine), centers on grotesque body imagery in Buñuel films such as *Viridiana, Los olvidados, Nazarín,* and *Simon of the Desert*; chapter two, "El retorno del muerto" ("The Return of the Dead One"), deals with Buñuel's obsession with sexual desire and its inherent connection to death as seen in *Tristana, That Obscure Object of Desire,* and *Viridiana*; chapter three, "Excrementos" ("Excrements"), discusses defecation and body decomposition as seen in *Phantom of Liberty* and *The Exterminating Angel*; chapter four, "Fiesta y carnaval" ("Fiesta and Carnival"), centers on festive rituals in *The Exterminating Angel* and other movies; chapter five, "La risa" ("Laughter"), offers a study of Buñuelian ambivalent humor as displayed in *Nazarín*; chapter six, "Juegos de azar" ("Games of Chance"), discusses the tension between games of chance and life and the inherent play or game quality of time itself, as toyed with by Buñuel in *Un chien andalou* and *Phantom of Liberty*; chapter seven, "Metonimia" ("Metonymy"), deals with metonymic references in *Tristana* and *Viridiana*; chapter eight, "El columpio" ("The Swing"), centers on a charged metaphor drawn from Bakhtin's carnivalesque idea of the swing (and Goya's drawings of a man freely swinging) applied to *Illusion Travels by Streetcar, Nazarín, Viridiana,* and *Belle de jour*; chapter nine, "Una tradición española: *Nazarín* de Galdós, Goya, *Edad Media: Libro de Buen Amor* ("A Spanish Tradition: Galdós' *Nazarín,* Goya, *Middle Ages: Book of Good Love*"), is a tripartite chapter in which two literary texts and an artist are shown to be interconnected; and chapter ten, "Buñuel, una apuesta por el diálogo" ("Buñuel, A Wager for

Dialogue"), discusses the carnival as a proponent for dialogue because of its inherent receptivity to "the Other."

Throughout the book Bikandi-Mejias draws on critical and philosophical approaches by theorists such as Bergson, Barthes, Kristeva, Derrida, Levinas, Jakobson, Todorov, and Bakhtin to back his thesis that Buñuel is connected to the world of the *carnivalesco* (12), focusing primarily on Bakhtin's ideas about the carnival and its subversive nature. The chapter topics are all interwoven and echo back and forth among each other in a dialogue that both clarifies and expands upon Bakhtin. After *Galaxia textual: cine y literatura, Tristana (Galdós y Buñuel),* and now *El Carnaval de Luis Buñuel,* it is easy to see why Aitor Bikandi-Mejias is ripe for translation into English, for his studies would definitely enlighten and inform not only Spanish speaking/reading critics and lovers of Buñuel's films, but also experts or film buffs the world over. This latest entry into the Buñuelian canon is an entertaining read but is also challenging enough to be included in college-level film courses.

—Gerardo T. Cummings

Schönherr, Johannes. *Trashfilm Roadshows: On the Road with Subversive Movies*. Manchester: Headpress/Critical Vision, 2002. $19.95 paper. This is a remarkable book in many ways, not least because the author's approach to curating film screenings is to run anything that comes to hand without the slightest regard for such niceties as previews, publicity, or even permits and censorship. Schönherr's odyssey begins with his youth in East Germany (he was born in 1961), where he hung out with a fast crowd and eventually made such a nuisance of himself that the authorities expelled him from the country in 1983. Making his way to Nuremberg, Schönherr joined the "Kino in KOMM" film collective, rapidly rising through the ranks to become a promoter of various clandestine film screenings of his own, and building up a network of international contacts in the process.

In 1989 Schönherr settled in the U.S. and enrolled at New York University. At the same time, he began traveling around the world as a curator for hire. By 1992, he had drifted to Moscow, where he organized a series of illicit film screenings of the most radical filmmakers he could find, much to the displeasure of the authorities. Deported back to the U.S., Schönherr organized screenings in Detroit and New York City until curator Dennis Nyback asked Schönherr to take over the curatorial duties of the Pike Street Cinema in Seattle in 1993. Schönherr delighted in programming the outré and the unusual. After a tumultuous summer spent screening "New York Underground shorts, vintage American sex educational films, [and films] about dating, venereal disease, child birth, dangerous perverts and divorce" (59), Schönherr returned to Manhattan and set up the Lighthouse, perhaps his most famous film exhibition venue, on New York's Lower East Side.

When the facility was closed down for multiple building code violations in September, 1996, Schönherr promptly landed a gig curating the Seventh Pyongyang Film Festival of Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries in September of 2000. Plunging into the archives of Kim Jong-Il (and his late father, Kim Il-Sung), Schönherr urged his North Korean assistants to locate the most extreme examples of Communist propaganda in North Korea's film vaults. He somehow managed to export the resulting series of 35mm films to the Gothenburg Film Festival in Sweden in late 2000, offering stunned audiences a rare inside view of North Korean cinema.

This is just a partial sketch of some of Schönherr's nonstop exploits, which he relates in a matter-of-fact tone and documents with numerous stills. At the end of the book, he is still looking for the next interesting assignment or challenge: his career as a curator on the run is far from over. One is struck by the utter fearlessness with which Schönherr approaches each new venture, tackling assignments with a vigor and originality that is impressive if not foolhardy. The title of the book is somewhat misleading: although Schönherr clearly loves what he terms "trash cinema," he is really in love with film—anything on celluloid that can be run through a projector.

—Wheeler Winston Dixon